

AMERICAN ELOQUENCE ;

CONSISTING OF

ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, AND SERMONS ;

BEING THE

LITERARY REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JONATHAN MAXCY, D.D.

SUCCESSIVELY PRESIDENT OF THREE AMERICAN COLLEGES ; BROWN UNIVERSITY, UNION
COLLEGE, AND SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE.

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

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BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.



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TO THE PUPILS OF

THE REV. JONATHAN MAXCY, D. D.,

WHOSE MEMORY IS CHERISHED BY THEM

WITH AFFECTIONATE VENERATION

FOR HIS EMINENT TALENTS,

PROFOUND AND VARIED ERUDITION,

AND MORAL WORTH,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.



P R E F A C E .

IN presenting to the public this collection of the Sermons, Orations and Addresses of President Maxcy, the Editor believes that he shall render an acceptable service both to the interests of the Christian religion and to the republic of letters. Dr Maxcy's writings are surpassed by few in intrinsic excellence and value, and are entitled to an elevated rank among the productions of American literature. The intelligent and cultivated reader will perceive in all of them genius, refined taste, beauty of imagery, and vigor of thought and diction.

The brief Memoir of his Life is a task which the Editor would gladly have declined, could some one of Dr. Maxcy's intimate friends or gifted pupils have been induced to undertake it. He deeply regrets that he never had an opportunity of seeing this accomplished and eloquent divine, and of witnessing the force of his reasoning, his command of felicitous language, his discursive and brilliant imagination, and his extraordinary power over the passions of men, that he might be able more accurately to delineate the features of his mind, and the minute lineaments of his character. Although

great exertions have been made by him to obtain reminiscences of President Maxcy to enrich the Memoir, yet they have been unsuccessful; and the facts embodied in this sketch have been derived almost entirely from conversations with his pupils and friends, and other scattered sources of information. He is convinced, therefore, that he needs the candor of the public with respect to the imperfect miniature here given of this remarkable man.

On all subjects President Maxcy thought for himself, and the Editor considers that it is a mere act of justice to let him express his own views without comment. He cannot, however, be considered as pledged to every opinion of the Author, or the inferences which may be drawn from them. Dr. Maxcy possessed that catholic spirit which resulted from deep piety and high mental endowments, and he could not substitute the shibboleth of a party, in the place of love to God, and the practical exhibition of the Christian virtues. His great and noble soul was incapable of contracting itself into the littleness of bigotry.

The labors of the writer in editing this volume will be amply compensated, should it be made instrumental in the promotion of sound literature, of patriotism and of piety.

ROMEO ELTON.

New Haven, June, 1844.

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MEMOIR
OF THE
REV. JONATHAN MAXCY, D. D.,
SECOND PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.*

OBSERVATION upon the ways of Divine Providence evinces, that, not unfrequently, there is a coincidence of circumstances calculated to develope and mature the energies of individuals, and to prepare them to fill critical and important stations in society. Many illustrious characters in sacred and profane history substantiate this fact. Not to swell our pages, by advertising to many renowned worthies, we may see this truth illustrated in the subject of the following Memoir.

* This Institution was incorporated February, 1764, as "The College or University in the English Colony of Rhode Island." It was originally established at Warren, where, in the year 1769, the first Commencement was celebrated. In the year 1770, it was removed to Providence, where, in the same year, the first College edifice was erected. It was denominated in common parlance "Rhode Island College," till the year 1804, when, in consequence of a donation from its munificent benefactor, the Hon. Nicholas Brown, of Providence, the Corporation voted that this College should be "called and known by the name of BROWN UNIVERSITY." Mr. Brown's donations to this Institution, at various times, exceed the sum of \$100,00

The REV. JONATHAN MAXCY, D. D., was born in Attleborough, Massachusetts, September 2, A. D. 1768. His earliest ancestor of whom any account has been obtained, was his great-grandfather, Alexander Maxcy, who came from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and settled in Attleborough about 1721. His grandfather, Josiah Maxcy, Esq., who died in 1772, was for many years a member of the colonial Legislature of Massachusetts, and throughout a long life, enjoyed the esteem and confidence of the community. Dr. Maxcy was the eldest son of Levi and Ruth Maxcy, whose maiden name was Newell, the daughter of Jacob Newell.* His mother was a woman of strong mind and devoted piety, and beautifully exemplified the practical influence of the Christian religion, by the uniform consistency which marked the whole tenor of her life. Upon her devolved the delightful duty of implanting in the mind of her son those seeds of truth and righteousness, which should in after years bud and blossom into usefulness. She had the happiness to see her son eminent for literature, and successively elevated to the presidency of three colleges. This excellent woman died in 1815, aged 72, having been a worthy member of the first Baptist Church in Attleborough fifty-two years. His father was one of the most respectable inhabitants of the town in which he lived. He was a man of sound understanding, and occasionally amused himself in writing verses.†

JONATHAN MAXCY, the subject of the following narrative, gave proofs of extraordinary talent, and maturity of intellect at an early age. Often when a boy, he was wont to give his companions in the neighborhood specimens of his extemporaneous oratory, which would have done credit to riper years.

* See Note A.

† See Note B.

The proofs of genius and devotion to study which young Maxcy had thus early evinced, seemed to indicate to his parents the propriety and expediency of giving him a liberal education. He was placed, therefore, preparatory for admission to college, in the Academy at Wrentham, Massachusetts, over which the Rev. William Williams presided with distinguished ability. Of this eminent instructor he was accustomed to speak in terms of high respect, and was much attached to him in after life.*

In 1783, at the age of fifteen, he entered Brown University. While an undergraduate, his love of study, brilliant intellect, urbanity of manners and correct deportment conciliated the high regard both of his instructors and fellow students. His studies in college served to sharpen and invigorate his mental powers, and he soon became distinguished as an accomplished scholar. His genius was remarkable for its versatility, and to whatever branch of knowledge he applied himself he was sure to excel. As a writer, his compositions were recommended as models to his classmates. His productions were eminent for delicacy of taste, and his conceptions were embodied in language of the most classic purity. Thus early were laid the foundations of his future eminence. He graduated in 1787, with the highest honors of his class, on which occasion he de-

* Mr. Williams was a member of the first class that graduated at Brown University in 1769, and from 1789 to 1818 he was a member of the Board of Fellows of that Institution. He opened an Academy for teaching languages, arts and sciences in 1776. He educated more than one hundred students, the majority of whom graduated at his *Alma Mater*, and many of them became distinguished in literary and professional life. Among his pupils were the late Hon. David R. Williams, Governor of South Carolina, and the Hon. Tristram Burges, LL. D., late Professor of Oratory and Belles Lettres in Brown University, and for many years a Representative in Congress from Rhode Island, whose speeches won for him a very high rank as a statesman and as a parliamentary orator.

livered a Poem, "On the Prospects of America, and the Valedictory Oration."*

Immediately afterwards, a vacancy in a tutorship occurred, and such were the qualifications of young Maxcy, though yet a minor, that he was appointed to fill it. This coincidence imparted a new impulse to the noble aspirings of his unfolding powers. During four years he discharged the duties of this office, with such ability and wisdom, as to secure to himself the popularity and respect of the Students, the Faculty and the Corporation of the University.

About this time, he became the subject of religious impressions, and joined the first Baptist Church in Providence, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Manning. He was licensed to preach by that Church, April 1, 1790, and soon after invited to supply their pulpit for several months, Dr. Manning having resigned his pastoral office. In this new and important station he shone with the greatest brilliancy. Possessing an active, vigorous and comprehensive mind, his faculties were continually improving by diligence and application. He soon attained a high reputation as a preacher, and such was the opinion that Church entertained of his talents and piety, that, in the following year, he was invited to take the pastoral charge. After mature deliberation he resigned his tutorship and accepted that important and respectable station.†

Mr. Maxcy was ordained as Pastor of the first Baptist Church in Providence, September 8, 1791. Rev. Samuel Stillman, D. D., of Boston, Mass. preached

* See Note C.

† Upon his resignation the following resolution was passed by the Corporation of the College, April 13, 1791. "Resolved that Mr. Maxcy's request for dismission from the office of Tutor be granted, and that the thanks of this Corporation be presented to him for his faithful services therein."

the ordination sermon, Rev. Hezekiah Smith, D. D., of Haverhill, Mass. gave the charge, Rev. Isaac Backus, of Middleborough, Mass. presented the right hand of fellowship, Rev. Benjamin Foster, D. D., of New York, made the introductory prayer, and the consecrating prayer was made by Rev. William Van Horn, of Scotch Plains, N. J.

On the same day that he was ordained, he was appointed by the Corporation of the College, Professor of Divinity. He was also, at the same time, elected a Trustee of the College.

Mr. Maxcy entered upon the discharge of his ministerial duties with earnestness, and a deep sense of his responsibility. His sermons were prepared with great care and accuracy, and delivered in a manner so chaste, dignified and impressive that they were always heard with profound attention and delight. In his pulpit addresses and pastoral visitations, he delighted in administering balm to the sorrowful, and in teaching the desponding where to look for consolation.

Mr. Maxcy was advancing to the acme of fame in pulpit oratory, when another more extensive field of usefulness was opened to him. President Manning, on the Sabbath morning of July 24, 1791, was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired on the ensuing Friday.* The corporation of the College did not long deliberate as to his successor. At the annual Commencement, the next year, Mr. Maxcy was unanimously elected President of the College, and resigned the pastorate of the church, September 8, 1792, on the same day that he was placed in the presidential chair. For this arduous and honorable station he was pre-eminently qualified. He entered immediately upon the discharge of

* See note D.

his official duties, and gave to them all his energies. Here his popular career commenced under the most favorable auspices. At the Commencement succeeding his inauguration, the College was illuminated, and a transparency was placed in the attic story displaying his name, with—"President 24 years old." The University, over which he presided with distinguished honor to himself and benefit to the public, flourished under his administration, and his fame was extended over every section of the Union. The splendor of his genius, and his brilliant talents as an orator and a divine, were seen and admired by all. Between the President and his associates in office, there was an intercourse of mind and feeling the most harmonious and delightful. He had nothing of that dictatorial, imperious and overbearing spirit which persons, who are elevated to power, are too apt to assume. He endeared himself to the students, by his courteous and conciliatory manners, and his paternal solicitude for their welfare, while his various and exact knowledge, sound judgment, refined taste and impressive eloquence, commanded their respect and supported his authority. President Maxcy beautifully exemplified the maxim,

*"Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."*

His government was reasonable, firm and uniform, and marked in its administration by kindness, frankness and dignity. He did not attempt to support his authority, as is sometimes done, by distance, austerity and menace, but his pupils were addressed and treated as young gentlemen. He well knew human nature, and especially the character of young men, and hence his

appeals were made to the understanding, the magnanimity and the conscience of his pupils.*

In speaking of his presidency over Brown University it has been justly observed, that he was one "whose name and fame are identified with its reputation, and whose mildness, dignity and goodness equalled only by his genius, learning and eloquence, subdued all envy, made all admirers, friends, and gave him an irresistible sway over the minds of those placed under his care."†

Under his administration the College acquired a reputation for belles-lettres and eloquence inferior to no seminary of learning in the United States. His pupils saw in him an admirable model for their imitation, and the influence of his pure and cultivated taste was seen in their literary performances. Though destitute of funds, and of patronage from the legislature of the state, guided by his genius and wisdom, the College flourished and diffused its light over every part of our country. It sent forth a constellation of accomplished scholars, whose eloquence has glowed upon the altar, guarded the rights and privileges of the people, and shone in the halls of Congress.

Mr. Maxcy's first publication was a Sermon occasioned by the death of President Manning, delivered July

* This system of government, we are convinced, will be found, in almost every instance, to be the best. The writer of these lines can say, from his own experience, and he hopes he may do it without the charge of egotism, that after having been a Professor in a college for the last eighteen years, and coming daily in contact with young men of varied dispositions, he never met with an instance of personal disrespect from a student. Let an instructor address and treat his pupils as young gentlemen, and endear himself to them permanently by his kindness, and by cherishing the virtuous principles of our nature, and he will be able to do what stern authority, pedagogical arrogance and a tyrannical mode of government can never accomplish. Let his appeals be made to the conscience, and they will imbibe a delicate, noble sensibility to character, and acquire a high respect for order and decorum.

† See the Hon. Virgil Maxcy's Discourse before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University, delivered September 4, 1833.

31, 1791. In this Sermon, which is written in a style chaste and elegant, he pays an eloquent tribute to his beloved and revered friend and preceptor. He expresses his opinions with independence, and expounds them with ability. The Sermon is replete with a vigor of expression, an elevation of thought, and a cogency of reasoning rarely found in so young a writer.

During his Presidency of Brown University, Dr. Maxcy published nine Sermons, four Addresses to Graduates and three Orations. They are all written with great beauty and felicity of diction, and exhibit vast attainments and a mind of the first order. Their number and variety, considering his duties as President and his other numerous avocations, evince his industry and the extent of his capacity.

One of his most celebrated productions is his Sermon on the Existence and Attributes of God, delivered in Providence, in 1795. The striking effect which it produced is still fresh in the recollection of many; and the impression was no doubt very much deepened by the manner of its delivery. The natural element of his mind was greatness, and on subjects of this nature, his powers were displayed to uncommon advantage. Here he made his hearers feel the grasp of his intellect, and subdued them by his logical arguments, his profound reasoning, and his deep pathos. In identifying the sympathies of his hearers with the developement and progress of the subject, and, in elevating the best affections of the heart, he was unrivalled. His train of thought in this sermon is luminous and philosophical, and it attracts our attention by its sublime sentiments and beautiful imagery, expressed in classical and forcible language.

In November, 1796, President Maxcy published two Discourses on the Doctrine of the Atonement, which

were delivered in the College Chapel. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of explaining the most abstract subjects in an obvious and convincing manner, and his style is as clear as the most limpid stream. These Discourses afford a striking contrast to many of the flimsy and superficial sermons of the present day. His views on the Atonement are in unison with those of President Edwards, and for acute and powerful reasoning, we think the intelligent reader will rank them among the ablest productions, on this subject, which our country has produced.

President Maxcy's reputation was now established as one of the first scholars and divines in the United States, and in 1801, when only thirty-three years of age, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by Harvard University. In the language of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "Academical honors would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment."

As a pulpit orator, Dr. Maxcy, during his Presidency of Brown University, was powerful and fascinating, and wherever he preached, the place of worship was crowded. In the eloquent language of one of his pupils, "What man who knew him, can forget Maxcy, the disciple and successor of Manning? Although our country abounds in able and learned divines, and the pulpit is everywhere adorned with eloquence: yet who, among them all, does in the enchanting attribute of utterance, approach so near as Maxcy approached to the glorious character of Him "who spake as never man spake." The eloquence of Maxcy was mental: You seemed to hear the soul of the man; and each one of the largest assembly, in the most extended place of

worship, received the slightest impulse of his silver voice as if he stood at his very ear. So entirely would he enchain attention, that in the most thronged audience, you heard nothing but him, and the pulsations of your own heart. His utterance was not more perfect, than his whole discourse was instructive and enchanting.*

As Dr. Maxcy's celebrity as a teacher and an eloquent divine, became known and appreciated, he was invited to more eligible positions, in distant parts of the country.

In 1802, after the death of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D. D., President of Union College, at Schenectady, New-York, Dr. Maxcy was elected to the Presidency of that Institution. Here he officiated with distinguished reputation, until 1804, when he was called to another sphere of action.†

In that year, upon the establishment of the South-Carolina College, at Columbia, South-Carolina, he received the unsolicited appointment of President of that College. He accepted of the Presidency of the South-Carolina College, and entered upon his official duties with the fond anticipation of finding a clime more congenial to his delicate constitution. He was now in the zenith of his reputation. His brilliant and attractive talents, the variety and extent of his erudition, and his agreeable and refined manners soon gained him the esteem of all classes of society. In this arduous and honorable station, he labored and shone for sixteen years. His eminent talents for instruction and discipline were now called into full exercise. The College was now in its infancy, and he devoted himself to its interests with great fidelity. He continued to preside over the South-

* See Hon. Tristram Burges' Oration delivered before the Rhode Island Federal Adelpi, Sept. 9, 1831.

† See Note E.

Carolina College till his death. Under his popular government that Institution attained a high rank and reputation among the colleges in the United States.

During the period of his presidency, he was often called to preach on public and extraordinary occasions. This contributed to his celebrity as a President, and made him known and admired in every part of the State.

The following extract of a letter from a gentleman residing in Columbia, to his friend in Charleston, South-Carolina, exhibits the impressive effects of his eloquence, and the high estimation, in which he was held at the South. It was written but a few months before his death, and was published in the Charleston City Gazette. It shows that while Dr. Maxcy's knowledge was continually increasing, his mind had lost nothing of its original vigor.

Columbia, July 6, 1819.

"Last Sunday we went to hear Dr. Maxcy. It being the 4th of July, it was a discourse appropriate to that eventful period. I had always been led to believe the Doctor an eloquent and impressive preacher; but had no idea, till now, that he possessed such transcendent power. I never heard such a stream of eloquence.—It flowed from his lips, even like the oil from Aaron's head. Every ear was delighted, every heart was elated, every bosom throbbed with gratitude. Such appropriate metaphor! such exalted ideas of Deity! and delivered with all the grace, the force, the elegance of a youthful orator! I was sometimes in pain, lest this good old man should outdo himself and become exhausted; but as he advanced in his discourse, he rose in animation, till at length he reached heights the most sublime,

and again descended with the same facility with which he soared. So far as I can judge, (and your partiality, I know, will allow me to be no mean critic) there was not heard the slightest deviation from the most correct enunciation and grammatical arrangement; all the powers of art seemed subservient to his absolute control. In short, I never heard any thing to compare to Dr. Maxcy's Sermon, in all the course of my life; and, old as I am, I would now walk even twenty miles through the hottest sands to listen to such another discourse. I am persuaded I shall never hear such another in this life."

This excellent man, erudite scholar, successful teacher, and eloquent divine expired in peace and in full expectation of the blessedness of the righteous, June 4, 1820, aged fifty-two years.

The death of an individual so admired and revered as President Maxcy spread a deep sorrow not only through his family, and the College over which he had so long presided, but through the State, and extensively through the Union. Science, virtue and religion mourned over the loss of one of their most gifted and illustrious sons. A brilliant luminary, which had long shed its bright and pure radiance over our country, was extinguished. His funeral was publicly solemnized, and his remains were borne to the silent house appointed for all the living, upon the shoulders of his disconsolate pupils, by whom this great and good man was so affectionately beloved and revered.

Dr. Maxcy, it is believed was appointed to the office of President the youngest, and officiated the longest in proportion to his years, of any person in the United States. He was connected with some college, either as

a student or an officer, nearly thirty-eight out of the fifty-two years of his life.

Dr. Maxcy married Miss Susan Hopkins, daughter of Commodore Esek Hopkins, of Providence, Rhode Island, a union to which he owed much of the happiness of his subsequent life. By her he had several daughters and four sons. All of his sons have been liberally educated. His amiable widow still survives and is living in Columbia, South Carolina.

In his person Dr. Maxcy was rather small of stature, of a fine form and well proportioned. All his movements were graceful and dignified. His features were regular and manly, indicating intelligence and benevolence; and, especially, when exercised in conversation or public speaking, they were strongly expressive, and exhibited the energy of the soul that animated them.

In closing this brief sketch, we subjoin a few particulars in relation to the character of Dr. Maxcy.

As a scholar, Dr. Maxcy was one of the most learned men which our country has produced. Criticism, metaphysics, politics, morals, and theology all occupied his attention. His stores of knowledge were immense, and he had at all times the command over them. Like the celebrated Robert Hall, he appears to have early imbibed a predilection for the abtruse inquiries of metaphysical studies, and to have thoroughly understood the principles of the various systems of philosophy. To this circumstance was probably owing the clearness, precision and facility with which he could separate truth from error, and which enabled him to wield the powers of argumentation with so much success. He possessed in a very extraordinary degree the power of mental abstraction, and few persons could pursue a train of thought to equal extent, without the aid of

writing, or retain their conceptions with a firmer grasp.

Although the bias of his mind gave him a peculiar interest in the recondite studies of metaphysics, yet he was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially but thoroughly. He cultivated with enthusiasm classical literature, the belles-lettres and the fine arts. He studied eloquence critically himself, and took great interest in the oratorical instructions of his pupils. Such was the promptitude and compass of his knowledge, that it seemed as if every subject that was incidentally introduced, was the one which he had been last occupied in investigating, and the one in which he was most minutely and extensively skilled.

As an instructor, Dr. Maxcy possessed unusual ability. His influence over his pupils was composed of all that genius, talent, experience and exalted reputation, could inspire. In his official station, he was conciliating, and treated them with the kindness of a father. He used every exertion to enlighten their minds, and to instil into them the principles of virtue and piety. He delighted to assist and encourage those of his pupils who applied to him for patronage or advice. He entered into their concerns with the most lively interest, and with pleasure imparted to them the lights of his experience and wisdom. The dignity and refinement of his manners, and his superior colloquial powers were greatly auxiliary in the introduction and discipline of the colleges over which he presided. He possessed a happy faculty of accommodating his instructions to the abilities and attainments of his pupils. His manner of imparting instruction was unrivalled. He saw every subject as a whole, and presented it to his pupils in a most

attractive form. His Lecture Introductory to a course on Rhetoric and Criticism, we presume, will convey a good idea of his method of instruction and style of lecturing.

In the language of one his colleagues of the South-Carolina College, "As a teacher, Dr. Maxcy enjoyed a reputation higher, perhaps, than that of any other president of a college in the United States. His pupils all dwell with admiration, on the clearness and comprehension of his ideas; on the precision and aptness of his expressions. Many of these qualifications are, doubtless, to be attributed to his long experience as an instructor, which rendered his contemplation of the most abstract truths little more than a work of memory: they may however, in a much greater degree, be ascribed to his early devotion to such studies and to his unwearied endeavors to distinguish, between what is essential and what is adscititious, in every subject. His retired habits, as well as his mild and unassuming manners, also contributed to render his instructions at once imposing and delightful. The strongest evidences of his success are the gratitude and veneration, which his pupils, uniformly, evince for his memory."*

His numerous pupils, in every yart of the Union, speak of him in terms of the most fervid eulogy, and all unite in pronouncing him as a teacher one of the most perfect models. "They often acknowledged that they acquired a clearer perception of the beauties or subtilties, or errors of a writer, by listening to his remarks upon them, than even by a studious perusal of the work itself. But this power was never otherwise employed, than as an instrument of good. Learning, in the hands of Dr. Maxcy, was always the handmaid of virtue and

* See Prof. Henry's Eulogy on Dr. Maxcy.

the champion of morals. While he expanded the minds of his pupils and poured large draughts of knowledge from his own capacious stores, he ever steadily attended to their improvement as men, as citizens and as Christians ; and while he was a perfect master of the works of others, and at all times capable of demolishing their theories, and erecting others of his own, and therefore held, as it were, the minds of his pupils in his hands, he was ever careful to instil the purest orthodoxy in religion, the most perfect morality, and the most consummate patriotism in all the duties and relations of the citizen.*

As a preacher, Dr. Maxcy's great excellence consisted in the admirable proportion and harmony of all his powers. His conceptions were bold and striking, and expressed in a style pure, elegant and sublime. A profound and breathless silence, an intense feeling, and a delight amounting to rapture were the almost invariable attendants of his preaching. The impression made by his discourses was, undoubtedly, very much deepened by the peculiar unction and fervor with which they were delivered. His manner was emphatically his own. There was no labored display, nothing turgid or affected, but every thing was easy, graceful, dignified and natural. Though his voice was not very powerful, yet it was full and melodious, and his enunciation so distinct that every syllable he uttered in the largest assembly, fell clearly on the ear of the most distant hearer. His general manner of delivery was rather mild than vehement, and rather solemn than impetuous ; commencing in a moderate tone of voice, but becoming more animated and impassioned as he proceed-

*See a Sketch of the character of Dr. Maxcy in the Charleston City Gazette.

ed he gradually influenced the hearts and feelings of his audience.

In the performance of the devotional exercises of worship, Dr. Maxcy greatly excelled. Prayer appeared to be his habitual element. His prayers were always appropriate, and never failed to enkindle and elevate the devotions of the pious. His heart appeared to be melted and "his lips to be touched as with a live coal from off the altar," when he was engaged in this sacred and delightful duty.

As an author, we think the intelligent reader, who peruses this volume, will accord to Dr. Maxcy a very high rank. His writings are not numerous, but they are models of simplicity and beauty, of sublimity and eloquence.

His Sermons are imbued with simple, evangelical truth, rich in excellent practical remarks, and present to the humble and the pious new motives to religion. His Funeral Sermons are pathetic and sublime, and excel in instructive trains of thought, and in their application to truths which relate to our highest interest.

His Addresses to Graduates contain literary, moral and religious instruction of the highest importance to educated young men. They are replete with mature and sound wisdom for their guidance, expressed in language spirited, chaste and classical.

His Orations contain many splendid passages, and may be regarded as among the most finished and eloquent of his productions. They show him to have been a warm friend to every institution which had for its object the promotion of knowledge, patriotism, virtue and piety. A spirit of benevolence and love to the human race are manifested in his Orations, teaching men to regard each other as fellow-citizens and brethren. In the

language of Cicero, he felt, that, "*Caritate et benevolentia sublata, omnis est e vita sublata jucunditas.*"

Dr. Maxcy united in an eminent degree the qualities which command genuine esteem. As a man, he was amiable and beloved; as a companion, he was interesting and attractive; as a friend, he was sincere, constant and affectionate. In all his intercourse with society, he exhibited an example of Christian meekness, liberality and conciliation. He was frank, noble and generous, and had nothing of that disguise and duplicity which characterise the mean and the selfish.

Of his character as a Christian, his life forms the best eulogy. His piety shone with a mild and steady lustre, and exemplified the practical efficacy of religion upon the human soul. His religious opinions are developed in the following work. In his doctrinal views of the Christian system he was decided, but at the same time catholic in his sentiments, and extended his Christian affection to all who bore the image of the Saviour, and gave evidence by their lives and conduct that they were his disciples. He exemplified the aphorism, "*In necessariis unitas—in dubiis libertas—in omnibus caritas.*"

In the social and domestic circle, the finer qualities of his mind were seen to the greatest advantage. His rich and varied learning and brilliant powers of conversation combined with his polished and dignified manners, made him the delight and ornament of the cultivated and intellectual circles in which he moved. Though so much caressed in society, yet he appeared always the most happy in the bosom of his family. In the relation of son, husband, parent and master, he exhibited a commendable example of fidelity, affection and kindness. It was for home that his fond heart re-

served its best affections and its sweetest smiles. It was in his own family, that his benignity and kindness burst forth in unrestrained exercise, and diffused over his dwelling the radiance of his own pure, genial and benign spirit, and rendered it the abode of the most endearing attention and love.

In the character of Dr. Maxcy, the elements of mental and moral greatness were most happily combined.

“ His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, “This is a man.”

It is only at distant intervals, that God, in the dispensations of his providence, bestows such a man upon the church and the world—“a man (to apply to him what has been so eloquently said of Milton) who, if he had been delegated as the representative of his species to one of the superior worlds, would have suggested a grand idea of the human race, as of beings affluent in moral and intellectual treasure, raised and distinguished in the universe as the favorites and heirs of heaven.”

“ Ilis tibi pro meritis grata præconia voce
Posteritas omnis, virque puerque, canent.
Nulla tuas unquam virtutes nesciet ætas
Non jus in laudes mors habet atra tuas.”

Upon President Maxcy's monument is the following inscription:—

West face.

S · M ·

REVERENDI · ADMODVM · VIRI

JONATHANIS · MAXCY · S · T · P ·

COLLEGII · CAROLINAE · AVSTRALIS

PRINCIPIS · PRAEFECTI

RARIS · ET · PRAECELLENTIBVS · INGENII · ARTIBVS · FVLTVS · QVALES
VEL · SVMMIS · DIGNITATIBVS · CONSTITISSENT · AVSPICIO · BONO
HVJVS · INSTITVTI · PRAESES · RELATVS · EST · IN · IP SO · TEMPORIS
MOMENTO · CVM · SINGVLARIA · EJVS · MVNERA · MAXIME · ESSENT
ALVMNIS · EMOLVMENTO · AD · FINGENDOS · MORES · LITERARIOS
VEL · AD · CASTIGANDA · JVDICIA · NEC · NON · VIAM · QVA · APVD
HOMINES · GRATIAM · PARERENT · MONSTRANDO · ANIMOSQVE
EORVM · STVDIO · BONARVM · ARTIVM · INFLAMMANDO
TALIS · ERAT · PRAELECTOR · VT · IN · ILLO · NON · INGENII · VIS · NON · LVMINA
NON · VERBORVM · FELICITAS · NEC · DECORI · GESTVS · ILLECEBRAE · ET
AD · COMMOVENDOS · AFFECTVS · INSIGNITER · APTAE · DESIDERARENTVR
OFFICIVM · PRAECEPTORIS · TANTA · PERITIA · SVSTINEBAT · VT · DVM
SCIENTIAM · IMPERTIRET · SIMVL · ARTEM · VERA · INVESTIGANDI
ET · BENE · RATIOCINANDI · FACILI · AC · JVSTA · METHODO · DOCERET

East face.

ADEO

SE · HABILEM · COLLEGII · MODERATOREM · PRAESTITIT
VT · INTER · ALVMNOS · JVXTA · CONCORDIAM · AVCTORITATEMQVE
LEGVM · SERVARET · EVITANDO · SIMVL · DVRTIAM
CVRIOSAMQVE · NIMIS · EXPLORATIONEM
DOCTRINAE · CHRISTIANAE · ASSERTOR · IPSE · MITEM
EVANGELII · SAPIENTIAM · EXCOLEBAT · VIAMQVE · SALVTIS
SEMPITERNAE · ARGVMENTIS · EX · LIMATISSIMA
PHILOSOPHIA · PETITIS · TVEBATVR
HAVD · FACILE · ALIVM · INVENERIS · CVI · CONTIGIT · BENEFICIA
AVT · MAJORA · AVT · DIVTVRNIO · ERGA · HANC · NOSTRAM
CIVITATEM · PROFERRE · NEMINEM · CERTE · QVEM · JVVENTVS
NOSTRA · PIA · AC · GRATA · MENTE · PERINDE · EXTOLLIT
PARENTEMQVE · STVDIORVM · REIPVBLICAE · FAVTORVM · CONCLAMAT
DESIDERIO · TANTI · VIRI · ET · IPSIVS · MEMORIA · BENEFICIORVM
PERCVLSA · FAMILIA · ACADEMICA · EX · APOLLINE · CLARIORVM
NVNCVPATA · CVJVS · OLIM · ILLE · SOCIVS · ERAT
H · M · P · C ·

South face.

NATVS · IN · CIVITATE · MASSACHVSETTS

IV · NONAS · M · DCC · LXXVIII

North face.

HIS · IN · AEDIBVS · ANIMAM · EFFLAVIT

PRIDIE · NONAS · JVNII · ANNOQVE · S · II ·

M · DCCC · XX

NOTES TO THE MEMOIR.

NOTE A.—p. 10.

Of the the other sons of Levi and Ruth Maxcy, Milton graduated at Brown University, in the year 1802, and afterwards became an eminent lawyer in Beaufort, South Carolina, where he died of the yellow fever in 1818. Levi, another son, who was distinguished for his talents, died also at the South.

Virgil graduated at Brown University in 1804, and was a classmate of the Hon. Marcus Morton, LL. D., late Governor of Massachusetts. His recent and sudden death, from the accidental explosion of a gun on board the United States Steam-Ship Princeton, February 28, 1844, has not only filled the hearts of an afflicted family with the deepest sorrow, but a large circle of friends by whom he is sincerely and feelingly lamented.

“Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.”

The Hon. Virgil Maxcy possessed talents and accomplishments of a high order. He was a ripe scholar, a finished gentleman and a pure statesman. His manners were bland, courteous and dignified. In social and domestic life, he was the object of love in his own family, and esteemed and honored by all who knew him. As a husband, father, friend, master and citizen his conduct was exemplary, and his virtues shone resplendent. In his public life, he exhibited a rare union of political firmness, united with candor and moderation. After studying law with that eminent jurist Robert Goodloe Harper, of Maryland, he settled in that State, and soon rose to professional

eminence. He was successively distinguished in both houses of the Maryland Legislature ; as Solicitor of the United States Treasury ; and as Charge d'Affaires from this country to the Court of the King of Belgium. In all the high and responsible stations which he was called to fill, he displayed signal abilities, and received the meed of high praise.

In the melancholy catastrophe which occurred on board the Princeton, our country was also deprived, at the same moment, of several distinguished persons and valuable citizens. Among others, an intimate friend of Mr. Maxcy, the Hon. Abel P. Upshur, the Secretary of State ; the Hon. Thomas Gilmer, the Secretary of the Navy ; Capt. Beverly Kennon, chief of a Navy Bureau ; and the Hon. David Gardiner, of New York, by a mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence, were all suddenly cut off in the midst of health, activity and usefulness.

NOTE B.—p. 10

The following epitaph was written by Mr. Levi Maxcy on his honest and faithful colored servant, who was an exemplary member of the first Baptist Church in Attleborough.

Here lies the best of slaves
Now turning into dust ;
Cæsar, the Ethiopian craves
A place among the just.

His faithful soul has fled
To realms of heavenly light,
And, by the blood of Jesus shed,
Is chang'd from *black* to white.

January 15, he quitted the stage,
In the 77th year of his age.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF HON. SAMUEL EDDY, LL. D.

AMONG the classmates of President Maxcy, with whom he formed an intimate and cordial friendship, and which continued uninterrupted to the end of life, was the Hon. Samuel Eddy, LL. D., of Providence. Mr. Eddy was born in Johnston, R. I. March 31, 1769. He was graduated at Brown University in 1787. He studied law with the Hon. Benjamin Bourne, an eminent and popular barrister, and was afterwards his partner in Providence. In 1798, he was elected by the people Secretary of the State; and they evinced their confidence in his ability and uprightness by annually re-electing him to that office without opposition, till May, 1819, a period of twenty-one years, when he declined a re-election. On his retirement from that office the General Assembly unanimously voted their thanks to him, "for his distinguished talents and ability manifested in the discharge of the duties of said office for more than twenty years."

On the occasion of his resigning the Secretaryship of State, the duties of which he had so long, so ably and so faithfully performed, Mr. Eddy made the following private record: "May 5, 1819. This day terminates my duties as Secretary of the State. I have the satisfaction to believe that, in the discharge of my official duties, I have been free from partiality. I have never knowingly received more than my lawful fees, and no man's business has been refused, or left undone for want of money."

Mr. Eddy was elected a Representative in Congress from Rhode-Island for three successive terms, and held a seat in the national councils, from 1819, the year he resigned his Secretaryship, to 1825. He was subsequently appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode-Island, and was annually re-elected for eight years, till June 1835, when sickness compelled him to relinquish all public employments. He passed the remainder of his life in domestic happiness, and literary pursuits, beloved by his relatives and friends, and honored by the public.

Judge Eddy departed this life, at his residence, in Providence, February 3, 1839, aged 69 years. In his death his native State and

his country were deprived of a pure and an able statesman. Without stooping to the arts of popularity, he exercised a wide and commanding influence over the minds of others, as benign as it was effective. His name is hallowed in the grateful remembrance of the citizens of Rhode-Island and identified with her history.

In 1801, he received from Brown University the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. In 1805, he was elected a member of the Board of Fellows of that Institution, and, with his accustomed punctuality, attended all meetings of the Corporation, until his decease, a period of thirty-four years. In 1806, he was elected Secretary of the Corporation, which office he held for twenty-three years, when he resigned it in 1829. He was an honorary member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and enriched the Collections of that Society with contributions from his powerful pen. He was Vice-President of the Rhode-Island Historical Society, and presented to that Society many valuable communications. He intended at one period of his life, to write the History of his native State, and it is a subject of regret that he did not execute such a work, for which he was so admirably qualified. His literary acquisitions were extensive, critical and profound. His mind was vigorous and active, his apprehension quick, and his judgment sound and discriminating. He had a marked predilection for analytical investigation, and for works of clear, strong and conclusive reasoning. In his manners he had great frankness, simplicity and sincerity, and in his habits he was singularly methodical. He was able in counsel, wise in deliberation and energetic in action. In his mental constitution there was a native dignity which never permitted him to descend to any thing little or mean. In the discharge of his private and public duties no man ever acted from better and purer motives. He possessed that integrity which no interest could pervert, and that love of truth which no difficulties could repress. In the language of Juvenal he dared,

"Verba animi proferre, et vitam impendere vero."

Judge Eddy, by his talents and his virtues, adorned every station which he occupied. To have been honored with the friendship of this excellent man, is regarded by the writer of these lines as a distinction and happiness which will ever be regarded by him with feelings of no ordinary pleasure. Sooner shall memory perish,

"Quam nostro illius labatur pectore vultus."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF PRESIDENT MANNING.

Rev. James Manning, D. D., the first President of Rhode-Island College, now Brown University, was born in Elizabethtown, N. J., Oct. 22, 1738. He graduated at Princeton College, N. J., in 1762, with the highest honors of his class. In 1763, he became the Pastor of the Baptist church in Warren, R. I. In the same year he recommended the project of establishing a College, and the next year, a charter for the Institution was obtained from the Legislature of R. I. In Sept. 1765, Dr. Manning was appointed President and Professor of Languages. In 1770, when the College was permanently fixed in Providence, Dr. Manning became the Pastor of the first Baptist Church in that town. In 1786, he was unanimously appointed to represent the State of Rhode Island in the Congress of the United States.

This excellent man, on the Sabbath morning of July 24th, 1791, was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired the ensuing Friday, aged 53 years. He presided over the College with distinguished ability, and discharged the duties of his office, with unwearied assiduity for the period of twenty-six years.

The following character of President Manning, is from the pen of his early friend and official associate, the Hon. David Howell, LL. D., of Providence, and was originally published in Rippon's London Register.

"In his youth, he was remarkable for dexterity in athletic exercises, for the symmetry of his body, and gracefulness of his person. His countenance was stately and majestic, full of dignity, goodness and gravity; and the temper of his mind was a counterpart of it. He was formed for enterprize; his address was pleasing, his manners enchanting, his voice harmonious, and his eloquence irresistible.

"Having deeply imbibed the spirit of truth himself, as a preacher of the gospel, he was faithful in declaring the whole counsel of God. He studied plainness of speech, and to be useful more than to be celebrated. The good order, learning, and respectability of the Baptist churches in the eastern States, are much owing to his assiduous attention to their welfare. The credit of his name, and his personal influence among them, perhaps have never been exceeded by any other character.

"Of the College he must be considered as the founder. He presided with the singular advantage of a superior personal appearance, added to all his shining talents for governing and instructing youth. Perhaps the history of no other college will disclose a more rapid progress, or greater maturity, than this, during the twenty-six years of his presidency. Although he seemed to be consigned to a sedentary life, yet he was capable of more active scenes. He paid much attention to the government of his country, and was honored by Rhode-Island with a seat in the old Congress. In state affairs, he discovered an uncommon sagacity, and might have made a figure as a politician.

"In classical learning he was fully competent to the business of his station. He devoted less time than some others to the more abstruse sciences ; but nature seemed to have furnished him so completely, that little remained for art to accomplish. The resources of his genius were great. In conversation he was at all times pleasant, and entertaining. He had as many friends as acquaintance and took no less pains to serve his friends than acquire them."

Over the grave of President Manning, the Trustees and Fellows of the College have erected a monument on which is inscribed a faithful record of "his social virtues, classic learning, eminent patriotism, shining talents for instructing and governing youth and zeal in the cause of Christianity."

President Manning embodied in an enduring form, few of the productions of his noble mind. Of his writings, the Editor, after diligent inquiry for several years, has been able to obtain only two of his familiar letters, and the following Address, which is copied from the original manuscript. It was delivered by Dr. Manning to the Graduates of Rhode-Island College at the Commencement, September 2, 1789.

"Having completed your academical course, you now commence members of the great community of the world. Here, while your country offers you a fairer opportunity to display your abilities, and improve to advantage that knowledge which you have acquired, than any age or country ever before presented, it becomes my duty to point you to that line of conduct which will most probably insure your success. The narrow limits prescribed by the occasion, will allow me to hint at only a few general observations.

"The first attention of a youth, stepping forward into life, should be to acquire and preserve a good character. A destitution of this places him beyond the possibility of ever becoming eminent. For, bad as the world is, it has always paid a voluntary tribute to virtue ;

and, though some vicious men have risen to a degree of respectability, it will be found on a nearer view, that they are indebted for that respectability to some virtuous traits in their character.

“To avail yourselves of this supreme advantage, I cannot recommend to you a subject more important and interesting than the Christian religion; of whose divine founder it was a favorite maxim, *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.*

“This divine religion creates principles in the hearts of its subjects the most operative and the best adapted to regulate the life and conduct, that can possibly be conceived. This at once portrays in the strongest colors, the state, connexions and claims of man. It disrobes the world of all its imaginary glory, and presents it in its own fugitive, fading colors, *the fashion of which passeth away*; while it inspires that unassuming humility, which renders a man less vulnerable by the envenomed shafts of malevolence. It moulds the heart into a divine benevolence, and is the purest of that exquisite sensibility, which deeply interests itself in the fortunes of others so that it *weeps with those who weep, and rejoices with those who rejoice.*

“This divine religion carries forward our thoughts to futurity; contemplates as a reality our dissolution, and that awful, approaching judgment, in which we must all become a party; it places us in that new eternal world, reaping the fruits of what we have sown in this. In a word, it places us immediately under the eye of God, now the witness of our actions, and soon to be our Judge.

“Next to this attention to religion, let me earnestly recommend forming, betimes, the habits of industry. Man was made for employment. All his internal as well as external powers testify to this great truth. To comply with this great dictate of nature is of the utmost importance; and youth, of all seasons of life, is the fittest for this culture. That is the period to form and give a proper direction to the habits, on the right constitution of which depends, almost entirely, the happiness of man.

“In selecting a profession, consult the strong bias of natural inclination; for against this current, few if any, have made a figure; and be sure that the object lies within reach of your talents.

“Should the Christian ministry, with any of you become an object, reflect on the absurdity of intruding into it while strangers to experimental religion. See that yourselves have been taught of God, before you attempt to teach Godliness to others. To place in the professional chairs of our universities the most illiterate of mankind, would be an absurdity by far less glaring, than to call an unconverted

man to exercise the ministerial function. This is to expose our holy religion to the scoffs of infidels, and to furnish to their hands the most deadly weapons. I omit to insist on the account such must render in the great tremendous day !

“ May that wisdom which is from above direct your steps in your journey through life ; and may you, after the discharge of the duties of good citizens, men of science and religion, meet the approbation of the Supreme Judge, and reap the harvest of immortal glory in the world above. With this devout wish I bid you farewell.”

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF PRESIDENT MESSER.

Rev. Asa Messer, D. D., LL. D., was born in Methuen, Mass., in 1769. In 1790 he graduated at Rhode-Island College, and the next year he was chosen a Tutor in that Institution, and continued in that office, till he was elected Professor of the Learned Languages, in 1796. He was licensed to preach, by the first Baptist Church in Providence, in 1792, and received ordination in 1801. He was elected Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, in 1799, and occupied this professorship till the resignation of President Maxcy, in 1802, when he was appointed President of the College. He presided over Brown University, for the period of twenty-four years, discharging most assiduously and faithfully the duties of that important station, for which his mental endowments and literary acquirements so eminently qualified him. In a short biographical sketch of Dr. Messer by Professor Goddard, of Providence, published in 1839 he observes, "During his administration, the College continued to flourish. An increased number of pupils resorted thither, and, at no antecedent or subsequent period of its history, have the classes ever been so large.* After having been connected with the College, eith-

* Numerus alumnorum qui in anno singulo primum ad gradum admissi fuerunt.

A. D.	Numerus.	A. D.	Numerus.	A. D.	Numerus.
1769	7	1798	18	1821	40
1770	4	1799	24	1822	30
1771	6	1800	23	1823	27
1772	6	1801	19	1824	41
1773	5	1802	28	1825	48
1774	6	1803	23	1826	28
1775	10	1804	22	1827	30
1776	9	1805	28	1828	25
1777	7	1806	19	1829	19
1782	7	1807	28	1830	20
1783	6	1808	33	1831	13
1786	15	1809	30	1832	23
1787	10	1810	20	1833	20
1788	20	1811	24	1834	23
1789	9	1812	23	1835	10
1790	22	1813	35	1836	24
1791	16	1814	47	1837	38
1792	17	1815	22	1838	30
1793	12	1816	33	1839	35
1794	20	1817	25	1840	36
1795	26	1818	18	1841	31
1796	17	1819	20	1842	34
1797	23	1820	29	1843	29

Alumnorum numerus integer—1525

er as a pupil or an officer, for the term of nearly forty years, Dr. Messer, in the year 1826, resigned the office of President. Possessing a handsome competence, the fruit in part of his habitual frugality, he was enabled to pass the remainder of his life in the enjoyment of independent leisure. After his retirement from collegiate toils, his fellow-citizens of Providence, elected him, for several years, to responsible trusts ; and these trusts he discharged with his characteristic punctuality and uprightness."

President Messer received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, from his *Alma Mater*, in 1806, and the same honor from Harvard University in 1820 ; and that of Doctor of Laws, from the University of Vermont, in 1812.

He expired at his mansion house, October 11, 1836, aged sixty-five years. His death was deeply lamented not only by his family, towards whom his conduct was ever marked by the kindest and most endearing consideration, and who felt the magnitude of their loss, but also, by his numerous pupils and friends, and the community in which he lived, who appreciated his sterling integrity, strong and discriminating mind, and energy of Christian principle.

"Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt."

Among the testimonials to his worth, and the regret manifested for his death, the following is here inserted :

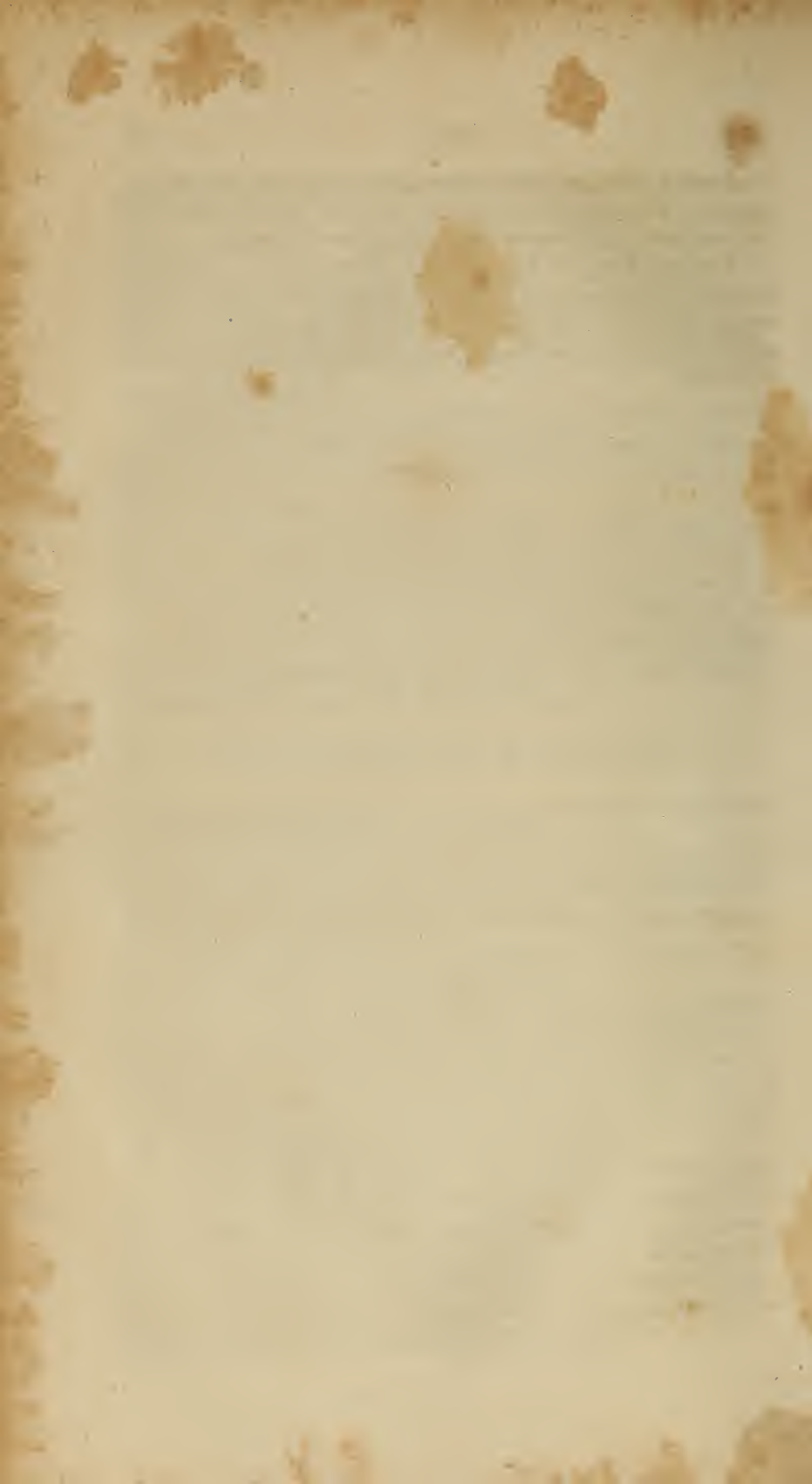
"At a special meeting of the Faculty of Brown University, held October 14, 1836, in the Chapel of University Hall, President Wayland announced the Departure from this life of the REV. ASA MESSER, late President of said University, whereupon the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

"Whereas the REV. ASA MESSER, D. D., and LL. D., was for nearly forty years an Instructor in this Institution, and for twenty-four years its presiding officer, an expression of the sentiments of the existing Faculty, upon the occasion of his unexpected and lamented death, is demanded by the respect which they individually and collectively entertain for the character of the deceased—Therefore,

"Resolved—That the Faculty of Brown University learn, with deep regret, that the REV. DR. MESSER, an eminent son of this University, and for a long course of years its presiding officer, is no more ; that we are impressed with a strong conviction of his acknowledged merits as an Instructor, of his vigorous intellect, and of his solid learning ; and that we gratefully recognize his title to the best distinctions of the CITIZEN, the MAN, and the CHRISTIAN.

*“ Resolved—*That, in token of our regret for his death and of our respect for his character, we, together with the undergraduates of this Institution, will attend his funeral to-morrow afternoon.

*“ Resolved—*That the Rev. Professor Elton and Mr. Professor Goddard be a Committee to present a certificate copy of these resolutions to the family of the deceased ; and that the same be entered upon the Records of the Faculty, and published in all the newspapers of the city.”



THE EXISTENCE OF GOD DEMONSTRATED FROM
THE WORKS OF CREATION.

~~~~~  
A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED ON

LORD'S DAY MORNING,

AUGUST 9, 1795,

IN THE

REV. DR. HITCHCOCK'S MEETING HOUSE,

IN

PROVIDENCE.



TO THE  
Y O U N G   G E N T L E M E N ,  
STUDENTS OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,  
OVER WHOM I HAVE THE HONOR AS WELL AS  
THE PLEASURE TO PRESIDE,  
I MOST AFFECTIONATELY RECOMMEND THE MOST  
SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THE  
IMPORTANT TRUTH BROUGHT FORWARD AND ILLUSTRATED  
IN THE FOLLOWING  
S E R M O N .

J. MAXCY.

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

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FOR THE INVISIBLE THINGS OF HIM FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD ARE CLEARLY SEEN, BEING UNDERSTOOD BY THE THINGS THAT ARE MADE, EVEN HIS ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD.—ROMANS i. 20.

Nothing will more effectually guard us against vice, than a firm belief of the existence of God. For surely if we realize that there is such a Being, we shall naturally infer from his perfections, from the nature of his moral government, and from our situation as rational creatures, that we are amenable at his awful tribunal. Superior power, wisdom and goodness, always lay us under restraint, and command our veneration. These, even in a mortal, overawe us. They restrain not only the actions, but the words and thoughts of the most vicious and abandoned. Our happiness depends on our virtue. Our virtue depends on the conformity of our hearts and conduct to the laws prescribed us by our beneficent Creator. Of what vast importance then is it to our present as well as future felicity, to possess in our hearts a feeling sense, and in our understandings a clear conviction, of the existence of that Being whose power and goodness are unbounded, whose presence fills immensity, and whose wisdom, like a torrent of lightning, emanates through all the dark recesses of eternal duration ! How great must be the effect of a sense of the presence of the great Creator and Governor of all things, to whom belong the attributes, eternity, independency, perfect holiness, inflexible justice, and inviolable veracity ; complete happiness and glorious majesty ; supreme right and unbounded dominion ! A sense of accountability to God will retard the eager pursuit of vice ; it will humble the heart of the proud, it will bridle the tongue of the profane, and snatch the knife from the hand of the assassin. A belief of the existence of God is the true original source of

all virtue, and the only foundation of all religion, natural or revealed. Set aside this great luminous truth, erase the conviction of it from the heart, you then place virtue and vice on the same level ; you drive afflicted innocence into despair ; you add new effrontery to the marred visage of guilt ; you plant thorns in the path, and shed an impenetrable gloom over the prospects of the righteous.—Sin has alienated the affections, and diverted the attention of men from the great Jehovah. “Darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.” Men have worshipped the works of their own hands, and neglected the true God, though his existence and perfections were stamped in glaring characters on all creation. From the regularity, order, beauty and conservation of this great system of things, of which man makes a part ; from the uniform tendency of all its divisions to their proper ends ; the existence of God shines as clearly as the sun in the heavens.—“From the things that are made (says the text) are seen his eternal power and Godhead.”

1. MAN himself is a proof of God’s existence. Let us place him before us in his full stature. We are at once impressed with the beautiful organization of his body, with the orderly and harmonious arrangement of his members. Such is the disposition of these, that their motion is the most easy, graceful and useful that can be conceived. We are astonished to see the same simple matter diversified into so many different substances, of different qualities, size, and figure. If we pursue our researches through the internal economy, we shall find, that all the different opposite parts correspond to each other with the utmost exactness and order ; that they all answer the most beneficent purposes. This wonderful machine, the human body, is animated, cherished and preserved, by a spirit within, which pervades every particle, feels in every organ, warns us of injury, and administers to our pleasures. Erect in stature, man differs from all other animals. Though his foot is confined to the earth, yet his eye measures the whole circuit of heaven, and in an instant takes in thousands of worlds. His countenance is turned upward, to teach us that he is not like other animals, limited to the earth, but looks forward to brighter scenes of ex-



istence in the skies.—Whence came this erect, orderly, beautiful constitution of the human body? Did it spring up from the earth self-formed? Surely not. Earth itself is inactive matter. That which has no motion can never produce any. Man surely could not, as has been vainly and idly supposed, have been formed by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms. We behold the most exact order in the constitution of the human body. Order always involves design.—Design always involves intelligence.—That intelligence which directed the orderly formation of the human body, must have resided in a Being whose power was adequate to the production of such an effect. Creation surely is the prerogative of a self-existent, uncaused Being. Finite creatures may arrange and dispose, but they cannot create; they cannot give life. It is an universal law through all nature that like produces like. The same laws most probably obtain through the whole system in which we are connected. We have therefore no reason to suppose that angels created man. Neither can we, without the greatest absurdity, admit, that he was formed by himself, or by mere accident. If in the latter way, why do we never see men formed so in the present day? —Why do we never see the clods of earth brightening into human flesh, and the dust under our feet crawling into animated forms, and starting up into life and intelligence? If we even admit that either of the forementioned causes might have produced man, yet neither of them could have preserved him in existence one moment. There must therefore be a God uncaused, independent and complete. The nobler part of man clearly evinces this great truth. When we consider the boundless desires and the inconceivable activity of the soul of man, we can refer his origin to nothing but God. How astonishing are the reasoning faculties of man! How surprising the power of comparing, arranging and connecting his ideas! How wonderful is the power of imagination! On its wings, in a moment, we can transport ourselves to the most distant part of the universe. We can fly back, and live the lives of all antiquity, or surmount the limits of time and sail along the vast range of eternity. Whence these astonishing powers, if not from a God of infinite wisdom, goodness and power?



2. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world," says the text, "are clearly seen." Let us for a moment behold our earth. With what a delightful scene are we here presented! The diversification of its surface into land and water, islands and lakes, springs and rivers, hills and vallies, mountains and plains, renders it to man doubly enchanting. We are entertained with an agreeable variety, without being disgusted by a tedious uniformity. Every thing appears admirably formed for our profit and delight. There the vallies are clothed in smiling green, and the plains are bending with corn. Here is the gentle hill to delight the eye, and beyond, slow rising from the earth, swells the huge mountain, and, with all its load of waters, rocks and woods, heaves itself up into the skies. Why this pleasing, vast deformity of nature? Undoubtedly for the benefit of man. From the mountains descend streams to fertilize the plains below, and cover them with wealth and beauty. The earth not only produces every thing necessary to support our bodies, but to remedy our diseases, and gratify our senses. Who covered the earth with such a pleasing variety of fruits and flowers? Who gave them their delightful fragrance, and painted them with such exquisite colors? Who causes the same water to whiten in the lily, that blushes in the rose? Do not these things indicate a Cause infinitely superior to any finite being? Do they not directly lead us to believe the existence of God, to admire his goodness, to revere his power, to adore his wisdom, in so happily accommodating our external circumstances to our situation and internal constitution?

3. But how are we astonished to behold the vast ocean, rolling its immense burden of waters! Who gave it such a configuration of particles as to render it moveable by the least pressure, and at the same time so strong as to support the heaviest weights? Who spread out this vast highway of all the nations under heaven? Who gave it its regular motion? Who confined it within its bounds? A little more motion would disorder the whole world! A small incitement on the tide would drown whole kingdoms. Who restrains the proud waves, when the tempest lifts them to the clouds? Who measured the great wa-

ters, and subjected them to invariable laws? That great Being, "who placed the sand for the bound thereof by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over." With reason may we believe, that from the things that are made, are clearly seen eternal power and wisdom.

4. Passing by the numerous productions and appendages of the earth, let us rise from it, and consider the body of air with which we are surrounded. What a convincing proof do we here find of the existence of God? Such is the subtilty and transparency of the air, that it receives the rays of the sun and stars, conveying them with inconceivable velocity to objects on the earth, rendering them visible, and decorating the whole surface of the globe with an agreeable intermixture of light, shade and colors. But still this air has a sufficient consistency and strength to support clouds, and all the winged inhabitants. Had it been less subtile, it would have intercepted the light. Had it been more rarified, it would not have supported its inhabitants, nor have afforded sufficient moisture for the purposes of respiration. What then but infinite wisdom could have tempered the air so nicely, as to give it sufficient strength to support clouds for rain, to afford wind for health, and at the same time to possess the power of conveying sound and light? How wonderful is this element! How clearly does it discover infinite wisdom, power and goodness!

5. But when we cast our eyes up to the firmament of heaven, we clearly see that it declares God's handy work. Here the immense theatre of God's works opens upon us, and discloses ten thousand magnificent, splendid objects. We dwindle to nothing in comparison of this august scene of beauty, majesty and glory. Who reared this vast arch over our heads? Who adorned it with so many shining objects, placed at such immense distances from each other, regular in their motions, invariably observing the laws to which they were originally subjected? Who placed the sun at such a convenient distance as not to an-

noy, but refresh us? Who for so many ages has caused him to rise and set at fixed times? Whose hand directs, and whose power restrains him in his course, causing him to produce the agreeable changes of day and night, as well as the variety of seasons? The order, harmony and regularity, in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, are such incontestible proofs of the existence of God, that an eminent poet well said, "an undevout astronomer is mad." In the time of Cicero, when the knowledge of astronomy was very imperfect, he did not hesitate to declare, that in his opinion the man who asserted the heavenly bodies were not framed and moved by a divine understanding, was himself void of all understanding. Well indeed is it said, that the heavens declare the glory of God.

'This great Being is every where present. He exists all around us. He is not, as we are apt to imagine, at a great distance. Wherever we turn, his image meets our view. We see him in the earth, in the ocean, in the air, in the sun, moon and stars. We feel him in ourselves. He is always working round us; he performs the greatest operations, produces the noblest effects, discovers himself in a thousand different ways, and yet the real GOD remains unseen. All parts of creation are equally under his inspection. Though he warms the breast of the highest angel in heaven, yet he breathes life into the meanest insect on earth. He lives through all his works, supporting all by the word of his power. He shines in the verdure that clothes the plains, in the lily that delights the vale, and in the forest that waves on the mountain. He supports the slender reed that trembles in the breeze, and the sturdy oak that defies the tempest. His presence cheers the inanimate creation. Far in the wilderness, where human eye never saw, where the savage foot never trod, there he bids the blooming forest smile, and the blushing rose open its leaves to the morning sun. There he causes the feathered inhabitants to whistle their wild notes to the listening trees and echoing mountains. There nature lives in all her wanton wildness. There the ravished eye, hurrying from scene to scene, is lost in one vast blush of beauty. From the dark stream that rolls through the forest the silver-scaled fish leap up, and dumbly



mean the praise of God. Though man remains silent, yet God will have praise. He regards, observes, upholds, connects and equals all.

The belief of his existence is not a point of mere speculation and amusement. It is of inconceivable importance to our present as well as future felicity. But while we believe there is a God, we should be extremely careful to ascertain, with as much accuracy as possible, what is his real nature. The most prominent features of this are exhibited in that incomprehensible display of wisdom, power and goodness, made in the works of creation. A virtuous man stands in a relation to God which is peculiarly delightful. The divine perfections are all engaged in his defence. He feels powerful in God's power, wise in his wisdom, good in his goodness. The vicious man, on the contrary, stands in a relation to God which is of all things the most dreadful. He is unwilling to know that God has sufficient wisdom to search out all his wickedness, sufficient goodness to the universe to determine to punish that wickedness, and sufficient power to execute that determination. A firm belief in the existence of God will heighten all the enjoyments of life, and, by conforming our hearts to his will, will secure the approbation of a good conscience, and inspire us with the hopes of a blessed immortality.

Never be tempted to disbelieve the existence of God, when every thing around you proclaims it in a language too plain not to be understood. Never cast your eyes on creation without having your souls expanded with this sentiment, "There is a God." When you survey this globe of earth, with all its appendages; when you behold it inhabited by numberless ranks of creatures, all moving in their proper spheres, all verging to their proper ends, all animated by the same great source of life, all supported at the same great bounteous table; when you behold not only the earth, but the ocean and the air, swarming with living creatures, all happy in their situation; when you behold yonder sun, darting a vast blaze of glory over the heavens, garnishing mighty worlds, and waking ten thousand songs



of praise ; when you behold unnumbered systems diffused through vast immensity, clothed in splendor, and rolling in majesty ; when you behold these things, your affections will rise above all the vanities of time ; your full souls will struggle with ecstasy, and your reason, passions and feelings, all united, will rush up to the skies, with a devout acknowledgement of the existence, power, wisdom and goodness of God. Let us behold him, let us wonder, let us praise and adore. These things will make us happy. They will wean us from vice, and attach us to virtue. As a belief of the existence of God is a fundamental point of salvation, he who denies it runs the greatest conceivable hazard. He resigns the satisfaction of a good conscience, quits the hopes of a happy immortality, and exposes himself to destruction. All this for what ? for the short-lived pleasures of a riotous, dissolute life. How wretched, when he finds his atheistical confidence totally disappointed. Instead of his beloved sleep and insensibility, with which he so fondly flattered himself, he will find himself still existing after death, removed to a strange place ; he will then find that there is a God, who will not suffer his rational creatures to fall into annihilation as a refuge from the just punishment of their crimes ; he will find himself doomed to drag on a wretched train of existence in unavailing woe and lamentation. Alas ! how astonished will he be to find himself plunged in the abyss of ruin and desperation ! God forbid that any of us should act so unwisely as to disbelieve, when every thing around us proclaims, his existence !

A

DISCOURSE,

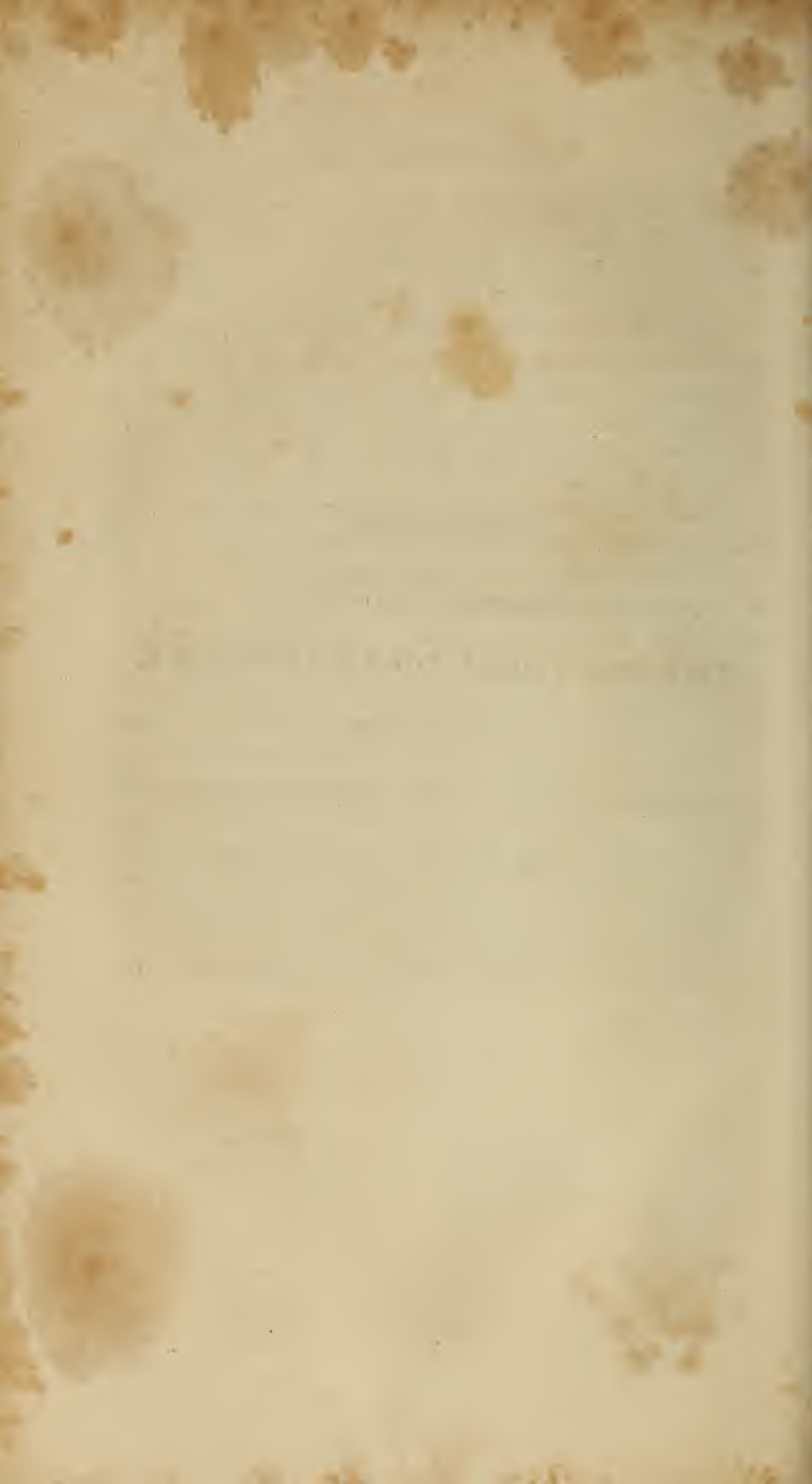
DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN

THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

IN TWO PARTS.

DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,

ON THE 11TH AND 25TH OF NOVEMBER, 1796.



# DISCOURSE ON THE ATONEMENT.

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## PART I.

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FOR IT BECAME HIM FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.—HEBREWS ii. x.

THE sufferings of Christ were essential to his character as a Saviour. Without them the pardon of sin would have subverted the authority of the divine law, and have prostrated the dignity of the divine government. For, if God should not execute the penalty incurred by the transgressor, if he should not manifest in his moral government the same abhorrence of sin that he does in the declarations of his law, his word and his conduct would be repugnant to each other, and he would afford no convincing evidence, that his law was a transcript of his will ; that it ought to be considered as sacred, and respected as an universal invariable standard of obedience for all rational creatures. One great and chief design of the atonement made by the sufferings of Christ, was to impress a thorough conviction of God's displeasure against sin, though he should pardon the sinner. It was essential to a consistent exercise of pardon, that in some visible expression, God's real disposition towards sin should be manifested as clearly, fully and unequivocally, as it would be in the execution of the penalty of the law on the transgressor. This disposition, when brought into view in some sensible manifestation, vindicates God's character from all suspicion, and fully discovers his attachment to the dignity of his government, to the rights of his justice, and the truth of his law. The sufferings of Christ appear to have been available to the procurement



of salvation, so far as they portrayed God's displeasure against sin, and evinced the infinite value he set upon his own character and law. Hence it is, that the scriptures so frequently bring into view a suffering, crucified Christ, as the only hope of salvation. His sufferings support the dignity of God, as the moral governor, while he extends mercy to the guilty ; they present him in a glorious point of light, as the universal sovereign and proprietor, as the great source from which all things have proceeded, and in which all shall finally terminate. It is therefore with great reason and propriety that the text declares, that "it became him for "whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in "bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of "their salvation perfect through sufferings."

These words, by bringing into view the passion of Christ, as essential to a display of the divine character in the pardon of sin, present the doctrine of atonement in a light truly interesting and important. For surely nothing can be calculated more effectually to awaken the solicitude, and raise the desponding hopes of the guilty, than a prospect of forgiveness. Why God should require sufferings and the effusion of blood as a pre-requisite to the remission of sin, has been a subject of much inquiry, and to many "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." They have supposed, that if God would not pass by sin without an atonement, without full satisfaction to his justice, he must be naturally implacable ; that he has no mercy, because he punishes the innocent for the guilty, and bestows no good without an adequate compensation. Sufferings, it is true, can add nothing to the love of God to his creatures : but they may be, and it is hoped can be, proved to be necessary to a consistent exercise and display of that love. Atonement does not imply a purchase of God's mercy ; it does not imply satisfaction to justice, as a cancellation of debt ; nor does it infer any obligation on justice for the liberation of sinners ; for if it do, then sinners are not saved by forgiveness, since it is impossible for mercy to pardon, where justice cannot punish. Atonement implies the necessity of sufferings, merely as a medium through which God's real disposition towards sin should

be seen in such a way, that an exercise of pardon should not interfere with the dignity of government, and the authority of law.

The sufferings of Christ for sin characterize the gospel scheme and distinguish it from all others. The atonement made by them, adds to the Christian religion its chief superiority, and lays the only foundation of hope for all who have just views of the divine law, and the moral state of man. All the doctrines of the gospel will derive their peculiar complexion from the manner in which the doctrine of atonement is explained. A mistake here will be peculiarly injurious, and will infallibly lead into error in every part of divinity. Atonement is the great sun in the centre of the system. Blot it out, and you are lost forever. Not a ray from any other quarter will dart through the gloomy prison of sin, to cheer its disconsolate inhabitants, to disenthral them from their chains, and enlighten their path to freedom and glory.

The design of revelation is to unfold the true God to men, acting according to the principles of his nature. This God is just and merciful. He is disposed to punish and to pardon. How then shall his justice and his mercy be displayed towards the transgressor, without infringing or destroying each other? God threatens punishment to sin. Sin is committed. God, instead of punishing, pardons. Where is his justice? Where is his truth? Where is the regard due to his law, his character and government? If he punish, where is his mercy? These difficulties will be obviated by a right understanding of the atonement which Christ made for sin. To exhaust this important subject, to comprehend all its connexions and consequences, perhaps at present exceeds all human capacity. Enough of it, however, can be known and understood, to enable us to perceive its excellency, and to secure our present and future felicity. As the design of atonement was to save men from the curse of the law, in consistency with the perfections and designs of God, the atonement had immediate respect to the law of God, to the moral state of men, and to the ultimate and chief end of God in creation. Without a just and proper view of these three points, all inquiries respecting atonement will be extremely defective, if not totally erroneous. They will leave us, like an unpiloted ship, driven by the winds over the pathless ocean.

In the subsequent discourse, therefore, I shall

- I. First explain the nature of the divine law, the moral state of man, and the design of God in creation.
  - II. Secondly, the matter, the necessity, and the nature of atonement.
- A few inferences will then close the subject.

I. I shall begin the first division of this discourse, by  
*First*—Explaining the nature of the divine law.

Under this denomination we are not to include all the laws given to the people of Israel. For though these may be termed divine with respect to their author, yet they are not all of a moral nature, and consequently not obligatory on all mankind. For this reason all the positive laws appertaining to the former dispensation, are not included in the phrases, “divine law,” and “the law of God.” These are used by way of eminence, to denote the moral law, as it is promulged and epitomized in the decalogue.

\* The laws given to the Israelites were of three kinds, moral, ceremonial and forensic. The first respected them as rational, accountable creatures; the second, as members of the ecclesiastical body; the third, as members of the political body. The two last kinds of laws were peculiar to the Israelites. They alone had the promise of the Messiah. His death and sufferings for sin were prefigured by the various offerings and sacrifices enjoined in their ritual. Hence they received the ceremonial law, as an indication of the Messiah yet to come, who being the substance of all its shadows, was by the sacrifice of himself to

\* *Leges autem iis latæ non unius generis fuerunt. Tres omnino theologis recensentur. Moralis sive decalogica, ceremonialis, et politica, sive forensis. Scilicet tripliciter considerari Israeliticus populus potuit. 1. Ut creaturæ rationales, a Deo, uti suprema ratione tam moraliter, quam naturaliter dependentes. Et sic data fuit ipsi lex decalogica, quæ quoad substantiam, cum lege naturæ, homines qua tales obligante, una eademque est. 2. Ut ecclesia veteris testamenti; expectans Messiam promissum, et lætiora per ejus consummationem tempora. Atque eo respectu acceperunt legem ceremonialem, quæ ostendit quidem, nondum venisse Messiam, et satisfactione sua, omnia consummasse, fore tamen, ut veniat et omnia faciat nova. 3. Ut populus peculiaris, rempublicam, genio ac indoli suæ convenientem, habens in terra Canaan.*—Witsii de Cæcon, Fæd. lib. iv. cap. iv. p. 609.



abrogate its authority, and discontinue its observance. Hence Christ, in the sufferings by which he made atonement for sin, had no other respect to the ceremonial law, than as he corresponded to its typical prefigurations.

The forensic laws of the Israelites were accommodated to their peculiar genius as a people; to their peculiar circumstances in the land of Canaan; and were designed to form the whole nation into a republican theocracy. Hence it appears, that the ceremonial and forensic or political laws of the Israelites, were of a temporary nature, and obligatory no longer than continued by the express injunction of the legislator. In this view, as they did not originate in the eternal fitness and propriety of things, they may be styled positive, in contradistinction to those which are moral; which express the unchangeable will of God, respecting the obligation, the obedience and disobedience, the reward and punishment, of rational creatures. These laws primarily flow from the absolute perfection of God, and like his nature are sacred, immutable and eternal. These laws, summed up in one body, are styled *the law*, or *law of God*. To this law the whole of Christ's work, in making atonement for sin, had immediate respect. Without a just view of this law, therefore, the doctrine of atonement cannot be understood, nor its necessity and propriety perceived. Concerning the divine law, two things must be particularly noticed.

1. It contains a prescription of certain duties. These are contained in the decalogue, as it was delivered at Mount Sinai, and are all summarily comprehended in love, as the fountain from which all real acceptable obedience flows. Thus Christ explained the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Mat. xxii. 37, &c. Paul viewed the law in the same light, when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 10. No action, therefore, either mental or external, which does not proceed from pure love to God, can come under the denomination of true virtue or obedience. This law is a delineation of perfect rectitude, and was



designed to govern the whole man, by inspiring right motives, and producing an entire correspondence between them and external actions.

2. The second thing to be noticed concerning the law is, that it contains comminations of divine vengeance against transgression. Without these, it would not properly in its nature have the force and authority of a law. The language of the law, expressing the penal sanction, is, "Cursed is every one who confirmeth not all the words of the law, to do them. Deut. xxvii. 26. This curse most undoubtedly is the just and proper punishment of sin. For it is inconsistent with the perfection of God, to threaten a punishment greater or less than sin deserves. This is the punishment from which Christ delivers. Thus Paul says to the Galatians, "God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Gal. iv. 4, 5. That is, to redeem them from its curse, as he explains it in another place. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. Let it here be particularly noticed, that this commination annexed to the divine law, is the sum and foundation of all the others expressed in scripture, and denounced against transgressors. Various threatenings are found in the New Testament, denounced against those who reject the gospel. These threatenings express the real penalty of the divine law. For no man can slight, neglect or refuse the gospel, without violating the law, and incurring its penalty. That this penalty, which will be executed on the impenitent, in a future state, is endless misery or destruction, appears from the following passages of scripture. In Dan. xii. 2, it is said, "And many of them which sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt." Matt. xviii. 8. "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." Matt. xxv. 41, Christ says to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And in verse 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Mark iii. 29, Christ says of him who blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, that he is "in danger of eternal damnation." Paul says of those who disobey the gospel, "Who shall be punished with everlast-

ing destruction." The punishment spoken of in these words undoubtedly is the penalty of the law. For the law only can condemn and punish. Here perhaps it will be objected, that the punishment implied in these words is not strictly endless, since the word everlasting, is sometimes appropriated to express things of a limited duration ; that it is not the nature of punishment to be endless, and therefore the term everlasting, when used to express its duration, does not prove it to be strictly endless. To this it is replied, that because the term everlasting is in some instances used to denote a limited duration, it does not follow that it is used so in all ; not even when used to express the duration of things which would cease to exist if left to the laws of nature ; for God can perpetuate whatever he pleases. For all our knowledge of the nature and duration of future punishment, we are wholly indebted to revelation. In this revelation God has explained the duration of punishment, and consequently the true penalty of his law ; not only by the word everlasting, but by unequivocal determinate phrases, denoting it to be strictly endless. This is fully evident from the following passages, which positively determine the meaning of the word everlasting, when used to express the duration of future punishment. In Mark ix. 43, Christ says, " It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." In Mat. xii. 31, it is said, " The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." In John iii. 36, it is said, " He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Of the same import are all those passages which speak of those who are said to perish, to be rejected, to be cast away, to be lost and destroyed. To these testimonies of scripture, ascertaining the penalty of the divine law to be endless misery or destruction, let us add the testimony of reason.

The law, whose essence is love, tends in its nature to secure the highest happiness of all rational creatures. For if all comply with its requirements, if all love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves, what room is there left for sin or

misery? These originate not in any deficiency in the divine government, but in deviation from the divine law. In this God has discovered as much goodness as he has in the gospel. For the first tends to secure the highest happiness without sin, and the last to secure it after the introduction of sin. Whatever therefore is opposed to God's law, is opposed to his gospel; and whatever is opposed to either, tends to introduce universal endless evil. If, therefore, endless punishment be not the penalty of the divine law, it does not appear that it has any penalty. For whatever penalty God annexes to his law, must be just; that is, it must be as great as the evil introduced by transgression, or as great as the glory of God, and the good of the rational universe, require. The greatness of this penalty must be estimated from the consequences that would ensue from an unrestrained indulgence of transgression, and the magnitude of the object against which the transgression is committed. The law of God tends to universal good. As sin opposes that law, it tends to universal evil. Did all rational creatures commit sin without any restraint from divine interposition, all would be involved in endless ruin and despair. The law of God, which is as near to him as his own nature, would be universally violated and contemned. For all these consequences, so dishonourary to God, so ruinous to creatures, each one concerned in transgression must feel himself accountable. Sin is atheism. It denies God. It strikes at his government and character, and consequently at all good and all happiness. As sin therefore tends to introduce endless evil, if punishments are to be proportioned to crimes, sin deserves endless punishment. Having explained the nature of the divine law, in considering its precepts and penalty, I now proceed to explain,

*Secondly,* The moral state of man. By the moral state of man, we are to understand, the state in which he is, considered as an accountable creature, capable of praise and blame, of reward and punishment. This state, as it respects all men in unregeneracy, appears from the scriptures to be characterised by the following things.

1. It is a state of entire alienation of affection from God.



That is, it is a state in which the moral temper is averse to divine and spiritual things, insensible of their excellency, and regardless of their importance. This truth is expressed in scripture, by "being dead in trespasses and sins," "being alienated from the life of God, desiring not the knowledge of his ways," "receiving not the things of the Spirit." The moral state of man in this view, does not imply, that he does not possess noble and exalted capacities of mind. These are not of a moral nature, and consequently not susceptible of depravity. Man, though destitute of all real holiness in the sight of God, though wholly sinful in all the exercises of his heart, still possesses natural affection, gratitude, sympathy, and sensibility; desire of pleasure, and aversion to pain; these are merely the affections and propensities of his constitution, and belong to other animals which are not moral agents. Man's depravity does not imply that he is destitute of all the natural ability on which the propriety of the divine commands and injunctions rests. If he be not a moral agent, if he have not ability to obey, it does not appear that he can be capable of disobedience. Deity will never censure a blind man for not seeing, nor an idiot for not being wise. He requires the exercise of nothing farther than the capacity he bestows. All the depravity of man consists in the wrong use of his natural powers, and in his unwillingness to use them as God requires. The preceding description of the state of man by nature, is fully confirmed by the following passages of scripture. Gen. vi. 5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. viii. 21, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Eccl. ix. 3, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." Jer. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Rom. iii. 10, &c. "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Paul testifies concerning himself, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He declares, that "The carnal mind is enmity



against God:" that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The conduct of men, in all ages and nations, fully exemplifies and confirms these assertions.

2. Another thing which characterises the state of man is, that it is a state of guilt and condemnation. This necessarily follows, from the consideration that man is in the disposition of his heart opposed to God and his law. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." By this knowledge come guilt and condemnation. All men are under obligation to obey God's law. The law therefore lays its injunctions upon them, demands obedience, and denounces punishment to the transgressor. "Now we know," says Paul, "that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19.

3. Another thing which characterises the state of man is, a state of total impotency, as to the attainment of salvation. The truth of this appears from two considerations.

1st. The law requires sinless obedience. It promises life to the performance of all its requirements, and to nothing else. Its language is, "The man that doth them shall live in them." But man has disqualified himself in a moral view to do these things, since he is "under sin," and continues to commit it while in an unrenewed state. As man, therefore, while a sinner, cannot render sinless perfect obedience, he cannot effect his own salvation.

2d. Besides, man has incurred the penalty of the divine law. It stands against him, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them." This penalty has been demonstrated to be endless suffering. How shall man free himself from it? He can do nothing which can render it consistent for God to pardon. He cannot keep the law by perfect obedience, and consequently cannot be saved on that ground. If he undertake to endure its penalty, he of consequence must give up all hope of salvation.

Having explained the moral state of man, I now proceed,  
*Thirdly*, To explain the design of God in creation.

It is a mark of a wise and intelligent being, to have respect in all his actions to the accomplishment of some end. This circumstance principally distinguishes the actions of men from those of brutes. In all operations performed by rational beings, we expect design, and an exact adjustment of every part to the accomplishment of that design. When we look at the majestic works of God in creation and redemption, we are at once impressed with the absurdity of even imagining them to have been made without a view to some great end. In these works we behold order, connexion, regularity and harmony. How these should have existed without design, is impossible to conceive. It is equally impossible to conceive, how God should make such stupendous works, without a view to some end, exceedingly great, glorious and important. For it is inconsistent with wisdom to make great preparations, and to perform great actions, for the accomplishment of small purposes. If God have one chief end in his works, we may be assured that these works are harmoniously adjusted to its accomplishment. All God's works then must be considered as means wisely arranged, and tending to one final issue. This issue must be brought into view before the means of its completion can be seen in their propriety and beauty. Let us then propose to ourselves this question; Why did God create? Surely he was under no necessity to do this. For if he was, that necessity must have been eternal, and the same reason must have been assigned for the existence of things, as for the existence of God. That reason God gave, when he said, "I am that I am." God, as he is eternal, involves in his own nature the cause of his existence; but this cannot be the case with any thing created. Creation, then, as it did not proceed from necessity, must have proceeded from choice. The question then stands thus; "Was God's end in creation himself, or the thing created?" The following considerations perhaps will assist us in answering this question.

1st. Before creation nothing exterior to God existed. The reason then why any thing has existed, must be sought for in God. That reason must have been his own choice, and if so, then his own pleasure, and not the thing to be created. Should it here be objected, that God made creatures on purpose to be-

stow happiness upon them, the objection proves this only, that God is pleased with bestowing happiness. If so, then God made creatures for his own pleasure, and not for theirs. If God made creatures merely for the sake of making them happy, why does he permit so many of them to be miserable? We learn what God means by what he does, as well as by what he says. God has created all things, and in these has exhibited a picture of himself. But it would be absurd to suppose all this was done without design.

2d. The next consideration I bring into view is, that it is inconsistent for infinite wisdom and goodness to prefer an inferior to a superior object. Such conduct would carry the most striking marks, and wear the most prominent features, of injustice and imperfection. All creatures are as nothing, in comparison of the immense GOD. Collect all the powers and principalities of heaven, all the perfection of angels and virtues of men, all the splendors scattered over creation; collect all these into one vast assemblage, and they are lost before God, like a mote in the full blaze of the sun. Creation has added nothing to the real sum of virtue and happiness; for these, wherever found are only streams from the great exhaustless fountain. God therefore created with a view to diffuse and communicate in different forms that immense fulness which dwelt in himself. God must love and regard the highest excellency most; but this is nowhere but in himself. Nor is this supreme regard of God, to himself, as some have affirmed, an exercise of selfishness, but of the highest benevolence; for this consists in a supreme regard to the greatest good. But this greatest good is God himself.

3d. In the next place we may consider further, that for God to act with a supreme regard to himself, or to the display of his true character, is to act in such a way as will secure the highest happiness of intelligent beings. For all true happiness results from the knowledge and enjoyment of the greatest good. God is the greatest and the only true good in the universe. It follows from this, that the more this true good is displayed, the more it will be known and enjoyed. Consequently, more happiness is secured by a display of God, than could be by any



thing else. God then must surely, in all his works, act with a supreme regard to his own glory, or to himself. This is the uniform language of scripture. God declares, "that he made all things for "himself;" that "of him, and to him, and through him, are all things."

From these considerations it appears, that God's ultimate and chief end in creation, was himself.



# DISCOURSE ON THE ATONEMENT.

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## PART II.

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FOR IT BECAME HIM FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.—HEBREWS ii. 10.

HAVING explained the several things proposed in the first part of this discourse, concerning the law of God, the moral state of man, and the ultimate and chief end of God in creation ; I now proceed to explain the matter, the necessity, and the nature of atonement.

Since it appears that the ultimate and chief end of God in creation was the display of his own nature, we may infer with certainty, that this end will be kept in view in the continuance and government of creation. For if it be not, then the arrangements in the divine administration are not calculated so as certainly to coincide with the ultimate intention of the divine will. But God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Therefore, all parts of the great scheme of creation, providence and redemption, will ultimately exhibit a complete picture of the true character of God. He will then appear in reality to be the “beginning and the end,” “the all in all.” The obedience and sufferings of Christ, as they are the medium through which God’s love of holiness and hatred of iniquity are seen, so they answer, as to the display of God’s glory, all the purposes and more than would have been answered by the endless obedience or sufferings of all transgressors. Atonement, therefore, by the death of Christ, is to be viewed as a necessary part of God’s great plan, and as possessing the propriety and fitness of means for the

accomplishment of an end. If we consider atonement, in a general view, as that part of Christ's mediatorial work which rendered the forgiveness of sin consistent with God's character, it will comprise, as essential to its nature, more than suffering, though suffering appears to constitute its chief and most important part. If grace were to be manifested, it was proper and necessary that that grace should "reign through righteousness;" that is, in such a way as was consistent with the rectitude or justice of God. Whatever, therefore, would bring into view the character and law of God as effectually as the perfect obedience or suffering of men, must be considered as the atonement for sin. Though the punishment of the transgressor would have displayed God's truth, and his hatred of sin, yet it would not have displayed his love of mercy, and disposition to pardon. But all these are displayed in the salvation of the transgressor, by the obedience and death of Christ.

Having premised these things, I proceed to explain,

*First*, The matter of atonement, or that in which it consisted.

1. The divine law requires perfect obedience. God, in giving that law, virtually declared that it was good, and ought to be obeyed. The sinner, by transgressing it, virtually declared that it was not good, and ought not to be obeyed. Should God in this case pardon, without manifesting his regard to the law, so as to establish its authority as a rule of obedience, and to display his aversion to sin, his conduct would coincide with that of the sinner, and tend to the destruction of his own government. But if God, by a vicarious or substituted obedience and suffering, give in his moral government a full confirmation and conviction of the goodness of his law, and the justice of its requirements, his conduct, though he pardon, stands as directly opposed to the conduct of the sinner, as if he should condemn the sinner to endure the full penalty of the law. The obedience of Christ, on account of the superior dignity of his character, honored the law, declared and confirmed it to be good, more effectually than the obedience of all finite creatures could have done to eternity. In Christ "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead." As he had all wisdom and goodness, his voluntary obedience must produce

a conviction that the law was good: for he could not err in his judgment concerning it, and consequently, if it had been a bad law, he would not have submitted to its precepts. The obedience of Christ, therefore, as it virtually condemned sin, and expressed his approbation of the law, so as to establish its authority as a rule of righteousness, appears to constitute an essential though not the principal part of atonement. Christ, as a surety, engaged to fulfil all the righteousness of the law. To do this, it was as necessary that he should obey, as it was that he should suffer. The language of scripture is, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 8. The obedience and sufferings of Christ, in making atonement, were inseparably connected. "Though he were a son," says Paul, "yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Heb. v. 8. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. viii. 3. But did not Christ's obedience bear testimony against sin, and in favor of the law, as really as his sufferings; Were not both essential to a display of justice and mercy; So far as the obedience of Christ rendered the forgiveness of sin consistent, so far it constituted a part of atonement.

2. The great and principal part of atonement, and which the scriptures most frequently bring into view, was Christ's sufferings. These were essential to his character as mediator and surety. It was necessary that he should be "made perfect through sufferings." It was essential that he should maintain the honor of the divine law, by fulfilling it in its penalty, as in its precepts. Hence he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Mat. v. 17, 18. Hence the sufferings of Christ were so far from disrespecting or abrogating the law, that they "magnified it and made it honorable." One jot or one tittle did not pass till all was fulfilled. Hence it appears, that Christ endured the real penalty of the law in its full extent and mean-



ing. Without a penalty, the law would have no force. It would have been no more than advice. As the penalty therefore was essential to its nature, and as one tittle of the law did not pass till all was fulfilled, it follows that Christ endured the penalty of the law. This is fully evident from the descriptions given of his death and sufferings. Is. liii. 6. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "My righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." To bear iniquity, to be stricken for transgression, signify to endure the evil which sin deserves. It is through Christ's sufferings only that we can obtain redemption and remission of sin. Thus says Paul, Eph. i. 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." We are said to be redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ." When Christ's blood is spoken of, it is in allusion to the sacrifices under the law, which were typical of his death, and pointed to that as making atonement. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." Lev. xvii. 11. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins." Hence the sufferings of Christ appear to have constituted the most essential part, and some contend the whole, of atonement.

*Secondly*, I proceed to explain the necessity of atonement. Why could not God pardon without it? Why should he require sufferings before he would extend forgiveness to the guilty? Would not his mercy have appeared more conspicuous in remitting the offences of his creatures on their repentance only, without exacting satisfaction? Is Deity so inexorable, that he will show no favor until the full penalty of the law be endured, and all his wrath exhausted? These difficulties will perhaps be obviated by the following train of thought.

1. The government which God exercises over his rational creatures, is not a government of force, but of law. Nothing therefore can take place under this government, that is arbitrary or inconsistent with the real meaning and authority of law. The obedience required of the subjects, is urged by the promise of reward to the performer, and the threatening of punishment to the transgressor. This promise and threatening are predic-



tions of things to take place, on the concurrence of particular specified events. On one hand stands the great Legislator, promulging his law, and enforcing it with the penal sanction ; on the other stands the whole system of rational beings, receiving that law as an unalterable rule of righteousness. These beings become transgressors. They incur that penalty, for the execution of which God's truth and faithfulness are pledged. How then shall God, without executing this penalty, maintain the dignity of his character and the authority of his law ? Not to execute the penalty, is to give up his government ; to repeal, to annul his law, and to fail in the accomplishment of his prediction. Hence it appears, that punishments are necessary in God's moral government. They support his law, they deter transgressors, and manifest divine displeasure against sin. But why cannot God govern his creatures without punishments ? This is the same thing as to ask why he cannot govern them without laws ? He can. He can govern them by force. But they will cease to be moral accountable creatures. Laws then are essential to moral government. Punishments are equally essential to laws. A law which has no penalty, or, which is the same, a law that is not executed, ceases to be a law. It loses all its force, and becomes mere advice. Therefore, if sinners are to be forgiven, it must be done in consistency with the meaning and authority of law ; for God cannot contradict himself. The legislative and executive parts of his government must coincide. Hence, if sinners are to be forgiven, something equivalent to the punishment of sinners must be done, in order to fulfil the real meaning of the law, and to support government. Hence, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, atonement is necessary on the same principle and for the same end, that punishments would be necessary without atonement. Viewed in this light, atonement is a substitute for punishments. It not only answers all the ends of these, but many more. If these were necessary without atonement, atonement without these was equally necessary. If then we maintain that God can exercise pardon merely on account of the sinner's repentance, we must maintain that laws can exist in full force without any penalties ; or that God can govern the moral system by laws, with-

out carrying them into execution. A greater absurdity than this cannot be conceived.

2. Atonement will appear necessary, if we consider it in the propriety of means adapted to the accomplishment of an end. The great plan which God has adopted for the existence, government, and final state of rational creatures, is undoubtedly the best possible, and will ultimately terminate in the highest and most noble purpose. To suppose the contrary, is to suppose imperfection in Deity. For the present plan has been brought into operation by infinite wisdom, which must discern and choose the best ; by infinite goodness, which must prompt the best ; by infinite power, which can execute the best. Of consequence, every part of this great plan must be so arranged, as directly to conduce to the highest ultimate end of the whole. This end has been shewn to be God himself, or the display of his glory. Atonement, considered in relation to the moral state of man, and the display of God's mercy, in saving him from that state, appears indispensably necessary. Unless God's mercy be displayed, his character will not appear to his creatures in its full glory ; and consequently the highest happiness of the system will not be secured. If the display of mercy be necessary, atonement is necessary. Mercy appears great in proportion to the greatness of the danger, misery or ruin, from which it delivers. The moral state of man has been shewn to be a state of the greatest danger, a state of condemnation and total ruin. Atonement implies an acknowledgment of that state as it really is, and of the perfect justice of God, should he leave man in it without any prospect of relief. Atonement, therefore, is the only thing which presents salvation as an act of real grace, and brings into view God, plenteous in mercy. All the glory that will ultimately redound to God, from the salvation of sinners, will arise though atonement, as the great means by which God will accomplish the high and ultimate end of creation. Atonement was necessary therefore to the perfection of God's great plan.

3. The necessity of atonement appears from the consideration, that atonement has been made, and from the frequent mention of it in the scriptures as the only ground on which we

can obtain salvation. It is very unreasonable to suppose that Christ would have died for sin, unless his death had been absolutely necessary. In a view of the amazing sufferings he was about to endure, he prayed to his Father, saying, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me," Luke xxii. 42. Had not his death been necessary, this prayer would undoubtedly have been answered. But without his death, neither the salvation of men could have been effected, nor the glory of God displayed. Hence Christ said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Paul says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." In Leviticus it is said, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul," xvii. 11. Christ at the institution of the supper said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Paul says, "We are justified by his blood." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The redeemed are represented as saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," Rev. v. 9. Yet we are assured that "there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." If these expressions do not point out the necessity of Christ's sufferings to make atonement for sin, it is impossible for language to point it out.

*Thirdly.* I now proceed to explain the nature of atonement.

The limits to which I am necessarily confined in this discourse, forbid me to enter into a full and extensive discussion of this part of the subject. I shall therefore confine myself to the solution of what appears most embarrassing, and difficult to be understood. The nature of atonement has in some degree, and unavoidably so, been brought into view in the preceding parts of this discourse. What I propose to illustrate under this head is comprised in the following propositions: That the nature of atonement was such, that though it rendered full satisfaction to justice, yet it inferred no obligation on justice for the deliverance of sinners, but left their deliverance an act of pure grace. This will doubtless be considered by many as a great absurdity



and positive contradiction. For how can full atonement for sin be consistent with forgiveness? If Christ has paid the debt for sinners, if he has given himself a ransom, if he has purchased them, how can they be said to be pardoned, or delivered by grace? If an equivalent price be paid for their redemption, may they not on the ground of justice demand salvation? How can those be subjects of forgiveness who owe nothing? If Christ has paid the debt, will it not be injustice to exact it again of the sinner? A man is arrested for debt, and thrown into prison. Property is demanded for the discharge of his obligation. Property is advanced by a third person. The creditor receives it. Is not the debt paid? Can the creditor in justice demand any thing farther of the debtor? May not the debtor on the foot of justice demand deliverance from prison? May he not demand his obligation, since it is cancelled by the property advanced? Is not the creditor bound by justice to comply with these demands? Would not a refusal to comply be deemed dishonesty, injustice and cruelty? The creditor complies. But does he show any grace or favor to the debtor? Does he treat the debtor more favorably than he ought to treat him? Does he do any thing more than he ought to do, or more than the debtor has a right to demand? The creditor exclaims, "I have treated this man with so much mercy and favor, that I gave him up his obligation when he had paid the whole sum for which it was given." Who does not perceive the absurdity of this? Thus it may be objected, that full atonement for sin is inconsistent with forgiveness. But the scripture insists on full atonement, and yet every where holds up the deliverance of sinners, as an act of pure grace. This is a gordian knot in divinity. Let us not by violence cut it asunder, but attempt fairly to untie it.

Before we proceed, it may not be improper to observe, that the greatest difficulty with which this part of the subject is embarrassed, appears to have originated in the want of an accurate definition of justice and grace. Theologians have said much about these, yet few have defined them with sufficient accuracy to render them intelligible, or make them appear consistent.

I shall therefore,

*First*, explain the meaning of the word grace.



*Secondly*, the meaning of the word justice.

*Thirdly*, apply these explanations to this part of the subject, with a view to solve the difficulty with which it is embarrassed.

*First*. What are we to understand by the word grace ?

We are to understand by it the exercise of favor, and consequently the bestowment of good where evil is deserved, and may in justice be inflicted. Where there is no exposure to evil, there is no room for the exercise of grace. He who is not guilty is not a subject of pardon. He who does not deserve punishment cannot be said to be freed from it by an act of favor. Grace therefore always implies, that the subject of it is unworthy, and would have no reason to complain, if all the evil to which he is exposed were inflicted on him. Grace will appear great according to the view which the sinner has of his own ill desert, and the consciousness he possesses of the punishment or evil from which he is delivered. Grace and justice are opposite in their nature. Grace gives ; justice demands. Their provinces are entirely separate. Though they are united, yet they are not blended in man's salvation. Hence that remarkable passage in Rom. xi. 6 ; " If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."

*Secondly*. What are we to understand by the word justice? It assumes three denominations ;—commutative, distributive, and public.

1 Commutative justice respects property only.\* " It consists in an equal exchange of benefits," or in restoring to every man his own.

2. Distributive justice respects the moral character of men. It respects them as accountable creatures, obedient or disobedient. It consists in ascertaining their virtue and sin, and in bestowing just rewards, or inflicting just punishments.

\* See Doddridge's Lectures, p. 190 ; and also Dr. Edwards' third sermon, preached at New Haven, 1785.

3. Public or general justice, respects what is fit or right, as to the character of God, and the good of the universe. In this sense, justice comprises all moral goodness, and properly means the righteousness or rectitude of God, by which all his actions are guided, with a supreme regard to the greatest good. Justice, considered in this view, forbids that any thing should take place in the great plan of God, which would tarnish his glory, or subvert the authority of his law.

*Thirdly.* Let us now apply these explanations to the solution of the difficulty under consideration.

1. Did Christ satisfy commutative justice? Certainly not. Commutative justice had no concern in his sufferings. Men had taken no property from God, and consequently were under no obligation to restore any. But do not the scriptures represent Christ as giving himself a ransom, and as buying his people with a price? They do. They also represent men, while under the influence of sin, as prisoners, slaves, captives. These expressions are all figurative, borrowed from sensible to express moral or spiritual things, and therefore are not to be explained as if literally true. If we say that Christ hath redeemed us, that he has bought us, that he has paid the debt and discharged us—if we have any consistent meaning, it must be this: That in consequence of what Christ has done, we are delivered from sin, in as great a consistency with justice, as a debtor is delivered from his obligation, or the demands of law, when his debt is paid. That is, God extends pardon in such a way, through Christ, that he does not injure the authority of his law, but supports it as effectually as if he inflicted punishment.

2. Did Christ satisfy distributive justice? Certainly not: Distributive justice respects personal character only. It condemns men because they are sinners, and rewards them because they are righteous. Their good or ill desert are the only ground on which distributive or moral justice respects them. But good and ill desert are personal. They imply consciousness of praise or blame, and cannot be transferred or altered so as to render the subjects of them more or less worthy. What Christ did, therefore, did not take ill desert from men, nor did it place them

in such a situation that God would act unjustly to punish them according to their deeds. If a man has sinned, it will always remain a truth that he has sinned, and that according to distributive justice he deserves punishment. In this sense justice admits the condemnation of Paul as much as it does of Judas. The salvation of the former is secured, and his condemnation rendered impossible by another consideration.

3. Did Christ satisfy public justice? Undoubtedly he did. This is evident from what has already been advanced respecting the necessity of atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy. Christ's sufferings rendered it right and fit, with respect to God's character and the good of the universe, to forgive sin. The atonement made by Christ presented the law, the nature of sin, and the displeasure of God against it, in such a light, that no injury would accrue to the moral system, no imputation would be against the righteousness of the great Legislator, though he should forgive the sinner, and instate him in eternal felicity. Perfect justice therefore is done to the universe, though all transgressors be not punished according to their personal demerit. The death of Christ therefore is to be considered as a great, important, and public transaction, respecting God and the whole system of rational beings. Public justice requires, that neither any of these be injured, nor the character and government of the great Legislator disrespected, by the pardon of any. In these respects public justice is perfectly satisfied by the death of Christ. This is evident from the following passages of scripture. Rom. iii. 21; "But now the righteousness (rectitude or justice) of God is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Before the introduction of these words the apostle had demonstrated, that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, were all under sin and condemnation. "Now," says he, "we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." All, if treated according to distributive justice, must be found guilty and condemned. "Therefore," says Paul, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." How, then, it might be inquired, can any be justified, and yet God not give up his law, but appear perfectly



righteous and just? The answer follows. "By the righteousness of God, which is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Rom. iii. 21. That is, the righteousness or justice of God, with respect to himself and the universe, is clearly manifested, though he do not execute the law, as to distributive justice, on transgressors, but pardon and save them. This is so far from being contrary to the law, that it is witnessed by the law. For the sufferings of Christ demonstrate, that God no more gives up the penalty of the law, than if he should inflict it on the original transgressor. The righteousness or justice manifested in this way is through Christ; "whom," says Paul, "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." For what end? "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." "To declare at this time his righteousness (for this purpose) that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 25, 26. Hence it is said, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. That is, the end of the law is as fully answered in the salvation of men by Christ, as it would have been if they had never transgressed, but had obtained life by perfect obedience. It is said, "If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive us our sins," 1 John, i. 9. He is just to himself, to his law, to the universe. God styles himself "a just God, and a Saviour." Is. xlv. 21. Hence justice and mercy harmonize in man's salvation.

From the preceding statement of the nature of grace and justice, it appears,

*First*, That atonement, and consequently the pardon of sin, have no respect to commutative justice.

*Secondly*, That the sufferings of Christ did not satisfy distributive justice, since that respects personal character only; and therefore, with respect to distributive justice, salvation is an act of perfect grace.

*Thirdly*, That Christ's sufferings satisfied public justice; and therefore, with respect to public justice, salvation is an act of perfect justice.

Thus the seeming inconsistency between full atonement for sin, and pure grace in salvation, vanishes and disappears. The



system of redemption rises into view like a magnificent edifice, displaying the greatest order, proportion and beauty.

Having advanced what I proposed, respecting the matter, the necessity and the nature of atonement, I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. From the preceding discourse may be inferred, the indissoluble connexion between the doctrine of atonement and the divinity of Christ. For it has been demonstrated, that the penalty of the law is endless misery, and that that penalty was, in its full extent and meaning, endured by Christ, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy. No finite created being could, in a limited time, endure the full penalty of the law in any respect. Yet we are assured, that Christ endured it when "he was made a curse." As he comprised in his divine nature an infinite quantity of existence, he could in a limited time endure a punishment which to a creature would be endless. This does not imply that the divine nature suffered. This was impossible. In this nature consisted the personality of Christ. As he took into union with it the human nature, he possessed a perfect consciousness of the oneness of that nature with himself. Hence the sufferings of the human nature derive all their worth and value from the divine nature. The divinity of Christ therefore was essential to atonement, and was the only consideration that made his sufferings answer all the ends of moral government, so as to render the salvation of sinners consistent or possible. It is unreasonable to suppose, that the Son of God would have been sent to effect the work of redemption, if it could have been effected by a mere creature; yet we are assured, that the "word that was God" "was made flesh." Hence, those who entertain such an opinion of the law of God, and the moral state of man, as to see no need of atonement, reject the divinity of Christ. But so long as atonement shall appear necessary, so long the doctrine of Christ's divinity must be admitted, and so long it will appear essential to Christianity.

2. From the preceding statement of the doctrine of atonement, we infer the erroneousness of that scheme of salvation which represents Christ suffering on the ground of distributive justice. If justice could demand his sufferings, he was treated

according to his own personal character, and of consequence his sufferings had no more merit than the sufferings of a transgressor. If these were just, in the same sense that those of the sinner would be just, he endured no more than he ought to endure. His death therefore on this plan made no atonement for sin. Besides, to represent Christ's sufferings to be the same as those of his people, is to destroy all grace in salvation. For if in him they have endured all to which they were exposed, from what are they delivered? In what respect are they forgiven?

3. If the preceding account of the law of God and the doctrine of atonement be true, we infer the erroneousness and absurdity of that scheme, which represents the punishments of a future state to be disciplinary, and designed wholly for the good of the sufferers. According to the scriptures, there is an exact distribution of punishments in the next world. Those who suffer are represented "receiving according to that they have done," "being rewarded according to their deeds." If so, they are treated according to law. For as this is the true measure of holiness and sin, this alone ascertains the merit and demerit of all actions, and dispenses proportionable rewards and punishments. If those therefore in a future state who suffer, suffer according to their deeds, they suffer according to law. If they suffer according to law, they suffer according to justice, and consequently all they deserve, and all to which they were ever exposed. How then are they saved? It is contended that they are saved by grace. How can this be? If they suffer according to their deeds, they suffer all that justice can inflict upon them, and consequently are not pardoned. If they suffer all they deserve, there is no grace in their exemption from farther sufferings, for justice forbids this. Therefore this scheme of disciplinary punishments, while it pretends to vindicate grace, destroys it. If men are saved after they have suffered according to their deeds, as they are not forgiven, they are not saved by Christ, any more than if he had never died. Of consequence, the scheme of disciplinary punishments virtually sets aside the necessity and importance of Christ's sufferings. But revelation assures us, that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

4. From the nature of atonement, nothing can with certainty be inferred as to the numbers who shall finally be saved. Had God given us no farther light on this subject than what we derive from the sufferings of Christ, whether we consider them for a part or for all of mankind, we should have been wholly in the dark as to the final issue of those sufferings. As the nature and design of these were to render the pardon of sin consistent, it appears that the atonement is as sufficient for the salvation of millions of worlds, as of an individual. For whatever would render one act of pardon consistent, simply as to the exercise of mercy, would render another consistent, and so on in infinitum. The number of instances in which atonement will be applied, and pardon granted, will depend wholly on the sovereign will and determination of God. One thing is doubtless certain, salvation will be extended as far as is consistent with infinite perfect benevolence, or as far as the glory of God and the highest good of the universe require.

I now conclude this subject, by recommending it to your most serious and careful attention. You will find it to be the only ground on which you can hope for future felicity. Atonement for sin is a peculiar and distinguishing doctrine of the Christian system. Viewed as the scripture represents it, it appears as high above all human thought and invention, as heaven is above earth. Upon a thorough examination it will be found consistent with the soundest reason, suited to advance the happiness of man, and to display the glory of GOD.



A  
S E R M O N  
PREACHED SEPTEMBER 14, 1796.  
AT THE  
D E D I C A T I O N  
OF THE  
M E E T I N G   H O U S E,  
BELONGING TO THE CATHOLIC BAPTIST SOCIETY IN  
CUMBERLAND.



## A SERMON.

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THIS IS NONE OTHER BUT THE HOUSE OF GOD; AND THIS IS THE GATE  
OF HEAVEN.—GENESIS xxxviii. 28.

A BELIEF in the existence of God, and in his intercourse with rational creatures has pervaded all ages and nations. Every temple that has been built, every victim that has been slain, all the rites of paganism, and all the institutions of Christianity, bear testimony in favor of this assertion. The various and opposite methods in which men have attempted to approach God, to render him their worship and to receive his favors, evince that they were ignorant of their true state by nature, of the divine attributes, and of the great Mediator, through whom all blessings descend. Inspiration assures us, that “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Tim. ii. 5. Through him every true Christian, worshipping in spirit and in truth, looks up to God as his parent, and receives divine favors. Intercourse in this way with God, is a peculiar privilege of every real believer, and a distinguishing trait in his character. It marks his progress through life. It bears him above immoderate attachment to earthly, perishable objects, sublimates his soul, invigorates his affections, enlarges his capacity of enjoyment, and qualifies him for the service of heaven. While he sits under the shadow of the Almighty, his ravished soul, struggling with extasy, bursts from her confines



of clay, joining with "angels and the spirits of the just made perfect." His religion is not founded on conjecture; it is no idle formality, no uninteresting speculation; but it is a truth, a substance, a heart-felt reality, a heaven on earth. All the operations of the divine spirit, in regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification and communion with God, are indications of his favor, and incontestible evidences of the reality of vital piety. Though reason abundantly confirms the divine original of the Christian religion, and points it out as the only road to glory; yet reason is by no means the chief source from which believers in general derive their assurance and consolation. They assent because they realize. They believe, because they feel. They rest assured, because they have the evidence of their internal senses. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." 1 John v. 10. He who has been brought by the power of God to a cordial reception of the gospel, can no more doubt the reality of religion, than he can the existence of the material world. In both cases he relies on the veracity of his sensible experience. How absurd then and vain is it, for those who possess no real knowledge of religion, to represent it as a phantom, a cheat, or delusion! With the same propriety might a deaf man deny the existence of sound, or a blind man the existence of light and colors. Christians, in all ages and countries, have the happiness to "know in whom they have believed. God is limited neither by time nor place. He often comes sensibly near to his people by day and by night, on the ocean or on the land, in the populous city or in the lonely desert. Behold Jacob, taking leave of his aged father, flying from the rage of an incensed brother, having no one to accompany him through a strange country. The sun falls beneath the horizon. Darkness spreads over the earth, and muffles up the sky. Jacob in the open air lays his head upon a stone. He sleeps. In this exposed and solitary state, his heavenly Father meets him, and fills him with consolation. God says to him, "behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said, "surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."—"How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God,

and this is the gate of heaven.”—You will please to observe that Jacob utters these words while his heart is filled with a lively sense of God’s presence. It is on this account that he calls the place in which he was the house of God, and the gate of heaven. It is on the same account that the scriptures represent the church as the house of God. I propose, therefore, on the present occasion, to accommodate the words of the text to the meaning of those phrases in the scriptures, which speak of the church as an habitation for God. In discussing the subject presented in the text, I shall in the

I. First place, shew what constitutes a church that may be styled the house of God.

II. In the second place, consider the church as a state preparatory for heaven.

A few observations shall then conclude the subject.

I. I shall in the first place shew what constitutes a church that may be styled the house of God.

Under this head, I do not propose to point out all the particular things necessary to the organization, instruction, and government of a church ; but the nature of it, considered as an habitation for God. A church consists of a number of real believers in Christ, united together under his laws, for the worship and service of God. The following are some of the leading traits in their characters :

1. They have experienced regeneration. This is expressed in the scriptures by various phrases, tending to point out its greatness and importance. Christ represented it under the notion of a birth, when he said to Nicodemus, “ except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Paul represented it as “ the putting off and crucifixion of the old man, as the destruction of the body of sin, as a restoration from death, as a renovation of the spirit of the mind, as a new creation.” The necessity of this change originates in the depravity and sinfulness of the human heart. These are abundantly testified of in the scriptures, and confirmed by the conduct of men in all ages and nations. The testimony of eternal truth is, that men have all gone out of the way ; that there is none that doeth

good ; that there is no fear of God before their eyes ; that they desire not the knowledge of his ways ; that they have come short of his glory ; that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; that every thought of the imagination of man's heart is evil, and that continually. These expressions convey an idea of the greatest alienation of heart from God and holiness. Though all men are sinners, yet all are not equally criminal, obstinate and incorrigible. All, however, are by nature in such a state as to need a renovation of heart to fit them for the house of God, and the enjoyment of heaven. He whose soul is the haunt of wickedness, whose passions are the vile minions of riot and debauchery, whose life is a catalogue of sins ; he can be roused from his lethargy by nothing but the loudest thunders of Sinai, and be changed to holiness by nothing but the resistless arm of the Almighty. The essence of this change consists neither in the illumination of the understanding, nor in the reception of any new faculties ; but in the infusion of a holy disposition, prompting to holy exercises of heart and conduct in life. The great work of regeneration is by the scriptures uniformly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as the immediate agent. Thus said Christ, "except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John iii. 5, 6. John, speaking of those who received Christ, says they were "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God." John i. 13. Paul to the Corinthians says, "we all beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. Paul to Titus says of God, "he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5. The Spirit of God sheds abroad his love in the heart, and conveys to it the same kind of disposition which resides in himself. Hence he who is regenerated, is united to God in love. "For God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 16. Hence it is, that all who are regenerated, "are built up a spiritual house." None but such can properly belong to it, and constitute an habitation for the living God. Thus regeneration appears to be an essential trait in the character of



true members, who form a church that may be styled the house of God.

2. The next trait in their character is, that they have true repentance for sin. This is indispensably necessary to pardon and salvation. This was the uniform language of John the Baptist, of Jesus Christ, and his apostles. John "preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Jesus taught "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." The apostles preached the same doctrine, when they said, "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins." Evangelical repentance consists not in occasional pangs of remorse, horrors of conscience, or resolutions to amend. If it does, then a Judas, a Felix, and a Herod, must be numbered with the pious, and be enrolled on the list of salvation. There are scarcely any, who, at some period of their lives, have not been alarmed with fearful apprehensions for the consequences of sin, have reformed their conduct, and implored forgiveness of God. These things they may have done, and be entire strangers to true repentance. This penetrates the inmost retirements of the heart. It consists in a holy disgust of sin, considered as a most heinous crime against God, and prompts the true penitent not merely to view sinful actions with abhorrence, but to trace them up to their origin, and disclose all the secret recesses of wickedness. Even when his conduct is fair and unblameable in the eyes of the world, he laments over the depravity of his heart. He possesses a deep and affecting sense of the intrinsic evil of sin; and opposes it, not merely because it exposes to punishment, not merely because it would injure his character, and squander his estate, but chiefly because he views it to be vile in its own nature, ruinous to his peace in its tendency, dishonorable to God, rebellion against his authority, opposition to his holiness and goodness. That repentance cannot be considered as genuine, which does not produce a uniform disgust of all sin, in every kind and degree; while it prompts to an invincible perseverance in every known duty, and an humble dependence on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. Repentance, as it implies an entire change of motives, feelings and actions, respecting sin, is an indispensable

prerequisite to the enjoyment of God and heaven. Salvation without it, appears highly irrational and absurd. For God to receive one without repentance, would be to receive one as a friend whom he knew to be an enemy. Hence it appears necessary, that all who belong to God's house, should have true repentance for sin.

3. Another trait in their character is, that they possess true evangelical faith. By this we are to understand a firm persuasion of all revealed truth ; a persuasion effected in the understanding by divine testimony, and wrought into the heart by the influences of the Divine Spirit. Hence it appears, that genuine faith is no dormant uninteresting principle, leaving the possessor in a state of languor and indifference ; but active, producing good works, assuring of justification and eternal life. Paul says, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, and "the evidence of things not seen." According to this definition, it appears to be a kind of divine internal sense, diffusing itself into futurity, conversing with distant invisible objects, bringing them home into present enjoyment, substantiating them to the mind, and laying a firm and immoveable foundation for hope. Evangelical faith has more immediate reference to Christ in his various offices ; to all parts of his work as Mediator, Redeemer and Saviour ; to his righteousness as the only ground of acceptance with God ; to divine mercy through Christ ; for the pardon of sin ; for the sanctification of the heart ; for growth in heavenly life ; for complete deliverance from evil, and instatement in eternal beatitude. Hence the scriptures represent faith as "working by love." No wonder that it does ; for it brings into view God's most holy character in the great scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ, and describes all the glorious realities of the heavenly state. When the heart is reconciled by divine grace, the soul not only apprehends God's character, but approves it, loves and admires it, as infinitely excellent, and longs to be changed into the same image. Faith works by love towards men. It displays itself in kind benevolent affection, especially to "the household of faith." It embraces, with arms of love," all good men of every denomination, and views them as children of God and heirs of glory. The scrip-

tures represent faith as "purifying the heart." This effect appears necessarily to result from its nature. We are so constituted, as readily to assimilate ourselves to those objects about which we are conversant. As faith brings into our view and enjoyment things heavenly and holy, it changes us "into their image, from glory to glory." Victory over the world is another effect ascribed to faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." As faith brings into view things of eternal weight and importance, the world, with all its pomp and pageantry, recedes and dwindles to a point. The soul rises above it, and soaring towards the divine nature, is lost in its immensity and glory. Thus it appears that faith is an exalted grace, and fits its subjects for the house of God.

4. Another trait in their character is, devotedness of heart to God. This implies a cordial approbation of his character, laws and government. As all true religion is seated in the heart, the source of action and virtue, devotedness of heart implies a constant obedience of all the affections to the divine will, and an external practical observance of all the duties, religious and moral. He who has been born from above, whose heart has been filled with sincere godly sorrow for sin, who depends for salvation entirely on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, considers himself not as his own, but as "bought with a price;" and endeavors to glorify God in body and spirit. He does not consider religion as a task, but as a pleasure. He finds that the Saviour's "yoke is easy, and his "burthen light." He rejoices to possess religion in his heart, purifying his affections, and fitting him for the house of God.

5. Another trait in the character of those who compose the true church, styled the house of God, is, that God's glory is the highest object in their view and regard. His nature is the sum of all excellence and perfection. It contains everything that can attract the affections, excite the admiration, and call forth the praises of all holy beings. "God is love." With this all his actions and all his treatment of rational creatures, will perfectly correspond. For God can do nothing contrary to himself. All his arrangements and operations, in the great works of creation, in the great kingdoms of providence and grace, are calculated to effect



a perfect display of his true character, and to secure the highest happiness of the rational universe. A display of God's true character is his glory. Those then who are real friends to God, must feel a disposition to coincide with all his designs and operations.

6. Another trait in their character is, that they strive for higher attainments in the divine life. The principle of this is implanted in the heart in regeneration. Under the influences of the Holy Spirit, it is increased and brought forth in all its operations. This life implies an inward propensity to holiness, and a divine activity in all the powers of the soul. It is, in its nature, tendency and effects, utterly opposed to sin. It implies an elevation of the affections towards God, and a progressive advancement towards heaven. "It is a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." It is communicated from Christ to all his sincere disciples. They look to him as the exhaustless fountain, and eagerly anticipate the glorious period when they shall be changed into his image, and satiated with his fullness.

Various other things enter into the character of those who are real members of the house of God. Those I have enumerated appear the most essential. For all who have experienced them, feel united together, and when worshipping their common Parent and Saviour, are sensible of his presence, and can exclaim, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

II. I now proceed in the second place, to consider the church as a preparatory state for heaven.

The design of religion is to meliorate the hearts, reform the manners, and save the souls of men. For these important ends, Jesus descended from heaven, and founded the church on that rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. His design was to purify the hearts of men, in a state of discipline and enjoyment, and thus prepare them for the sublime delights of heaven. That we may view the state of the church in the present world as preparatory for happiness and glory in the next, we need but consider them in a comparative point of light.

1. If we consider the church as a state of society, it will appear preparatory for heaven. In this point of view, it appears peculiarly accommodated to man, as a rational, communicative being. Not only his necessities and dependencies, but his natural instincts, impel him into society. Neither the beauties of nature, nor the inventions of art, can dissipate the gloom, nor alleviate the irksomeness, of perpetual solitude. The pleasures of social intercourse hold an elevated rank in the scale of man's enjoyments. They expand his affections, enlarge his capacity, refine his nature, and learn him to guide his conduct by the rules of decency and propriety. If such are the effects and enjoyments resulting from the society of men possessing different inclinations, pursuing different objects, and aiming at different ends—what that is truly excellent, amiable and delightful, may we not expect from the society of those, who imbibe the same spirit, possess the same moral temper, join in the same worship, and strive for the same heaven? Men in a church state are united by the nearest ties; ties founded in love. “Being knit together in love, they hold the head from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God.” Col. ii. 2, 19. Heaven appears to be the continuance and perfection of that happiness which is begun in the social state of the church on earth. Here we are surrounded with numerous imperfections, liable to many difficulties and animosities; but in heaven, these will cease; perfect union will take place; a more extensive society will commence; the affections will be enlarged beyond all bounds; all hearts will leap with extasy; each, happy in itself, and in that “great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” Thus the church state, in the present world, considered as a society, appears to be the gate of heaven.

2. The church, considered as a state of progression in knowledge and holiness, is preparatory for heaven.

Those who have experienced the great change of regeneration, are brought to a particular knowledge of God, and in a degree assimilated to his nature. In these consists the highest excellency of the Christian religion. It imparts to men the dis-

positions and moral qualities of God. These at first are drawn in small characters, but under the light of truth, they enlarge and rise into view, till Deity stands confessed in man. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." 2 Cor. iii. 18. That men in the present obscure and sinful state need some particular knowledge of God, and some change of their moral temper into his likeness, before they can be prepared to enjoy him, is a truth too reasonable and obvious to require much illustration. The church state is a dispensation of light and holiness, by which men are trained up as in a family, under one common parent, and fitted for heaven. It is by the gospel only that men can acquire true and saving knowledge of God. By the works of creation they may learn his existence, power, wisdom and goodness; by the law of Moses they may learn his holiness, justice, and opposition to sin; but it is by the gospel only that they learn his mercy, in the forgiveness of transgression, and in the salvation of the soul. In Christ they behold him under the endearing character of Father. Under him, they are here in a church state trained up as his children, growing in his knowledge, forming into his likeness, and looking forward to the mansions of glory. Knowledge of God appears to be an indispensable prerequisite to eternal life. Christ says, "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. From the scriptures it appears, that the knowledge and enjoyment of Christ will constitute an essential part of the enjoyment of heaven. They will see him as he is; they will dwell with him; he will lead them by the waters of life; he will be their everlasting light and glory. In these respects the house of God appears to be the gate of heaven; for all its inhabitants know and enjoy Christ. They receive him as God and man, as a prophet to instruct them, as a friend to increase their consolations, as a king to reign over them, and protect them from all their enemies. "They grow in grace, and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour." They have a special knowledge of the Holy Spirit, illuminating their understanding, sanctifying their hearts, assuring them of pardon, justification and eternal life. They will pass on from one degree



of improvement to another, till they shall be ushered into the full enjoyment of eternal beatitude. Various other circumstances might be mentioned, and considerations adduced, to present the church as preparatory for heaven ; but the narrow limits prescribed by the present occasion, urge me to finish this subject with some observations.

1. From the first part of this disclosure, we learn what are the most essential traits in the character of those who are fit to become members of the house or church of God ; and consequently, that if we admit those of dissimilar character, we deviate from Christianity and vital religion. For if we consider those as belonging to the house of God who have not been born from above, we consider those to be fit to worship him, who, according to declaration of Christ, cannot enter his kingdom. How then could a church, composed of such characters, be considered as the temple of God, or the gate of heaven ? How could those be fit to enjoy God in that holy mansion, who on earth had no delight in him ? The requirements of the gospel are all reasonable and consistent, suited to the nature of God, and the state of man. Men are required to repent, because this reconciles them to God, and leads them to view sin as God views it. Men are required to exercise faith in Christ, because this implies an acknowledgment of him in all his characters, works and offices ; and consequently a cordial approbation of salvation through his mediation. Men are required to devote their whole hearts to God, to do all things for his glory, and strive for heaven. How reasonable are these things ! If complied with, how conducive to our happiness ! How can we expect to enjoy God unless we love him supremely ? Heaven, to an impenitent heart, would be like the richest banquet to the sick. Is it not then of the greatest importance for us to inquire whether we are born from above ? Whether we sincerely repent of our sins ? Whether we strive to oppose the wickedness of our hearts ? Whether we receive and approve the Saviour ? Whether we depend on him for salvation and eternal life ? Unless we do these things, we delude ourselves, if we entertain hopes of heaven. For common sense teaches us, that we cannot enjoy an object, unless our disposition be assimilated to its

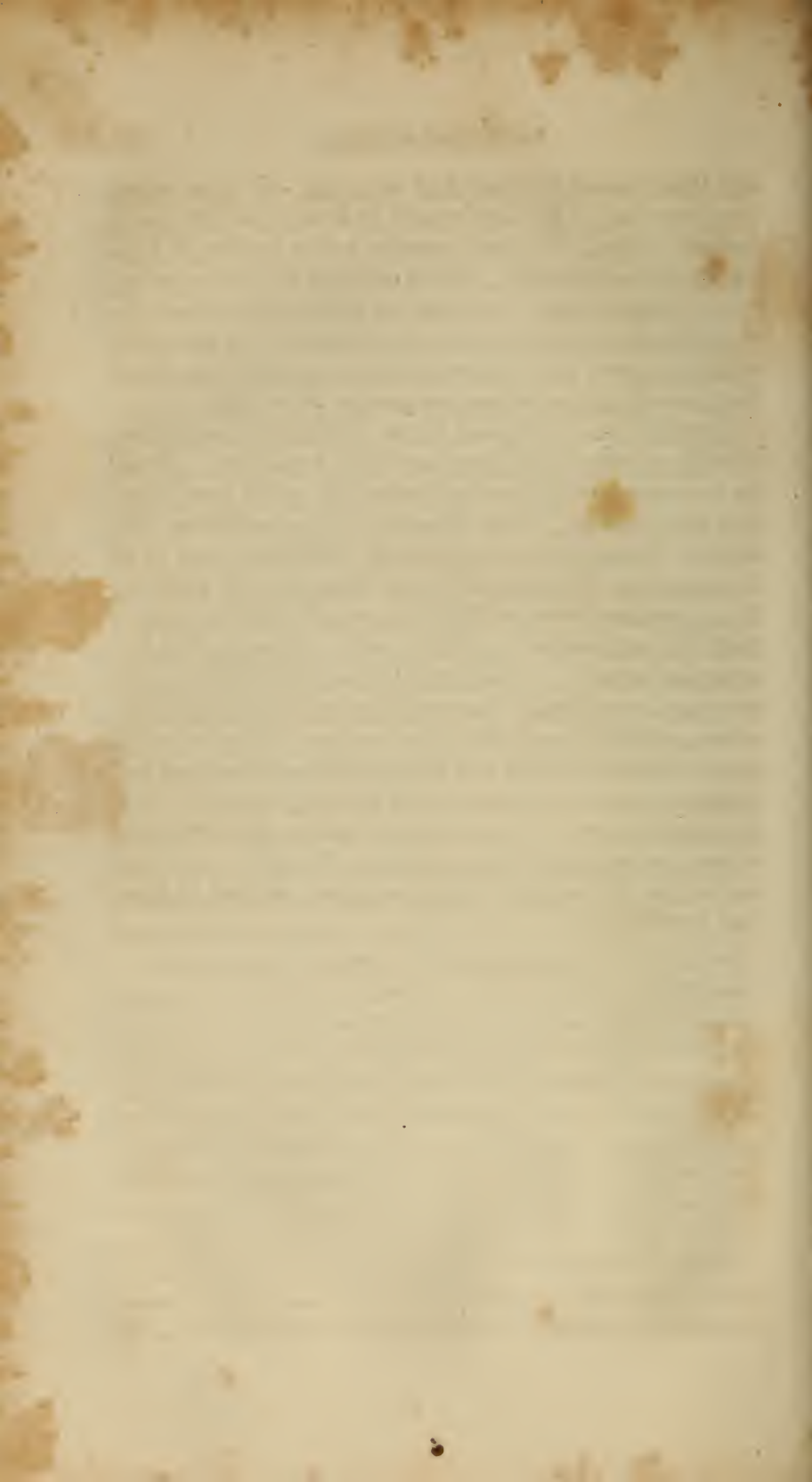
nature. How then ought our attention to be excited, that we be reconciled to God? Will neither the terrors of eternal darkness, nor the charms of eternal light, rouse us from our lethargy? Shall Jesus divest himself of his heavenly radiance? Shall he descend to earth in the form of a servant? Shall he agonize and die upon the cross? Shall he descend into the dreary mansions of the grave, and dethrone the king of terrors? Shall he ascend on high, amidst the shouts of admiring angels, and fling wide open the gates of Paradise for men? Shall he disclose to our view the ever-verdant tree of life, bending with the food of archangels, and spreading its branches for the "healing of the nations?" Shall the glorious Saviour do all these things for us, and we remain unmoved and impenitent? God forbid. Let us receive him as our Lord and Master. We shall then look towards heaven as our proper residence. We shall anticipate its joys, and triumph over the ruins of sin. We shall leap with pleasure at the approach of our emancipation. Our hearts will expand with rapture in the prospect of that period, when the Saviour, standing amidst his ransomed millions, shall lift the sword of victory, and the pale horse of death shall shrink into darkness—never, never to strike his hoofs in the vale of immortality! Then will an ocean of love, broad as the circuit of the spheres, roll down from the throne of God, and bear off the redeemed multitude to that delightful country, where sin, and pain and death, and sorrow, never had a name.

2. The second observation which I make from the preceding discourse is, that if the church is a state designed by God, and calculated to prepare men for heaven, the maintenance of public worship must be of the highest importance. In the ordinary course of Divine Providence, we are not to expect that men will become virtuous and good, without the means of instruction and information. God appears in all things respecting this world, to operate by secondary causes. In all the means which he has established in the ministration of the gospel, there appears to be a tendency to holiness and virtue. If this be not the case, why are the means appointed? If there be not greater probability that those who hear the gospel will become good than there is that those who do not hear it will, why is it preach-

ed? If men expect to be saved by the gospel, they must attend its ministration. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We must assemble for the worship of God, and inquire in his temple. If God point out the road to heaven, and we refuse to walk in it, can we without the greatest absurdity expect to arrive in that happy mansion? As reasonably might we expect, that by descending into the earth we should light upon the sun, or become companions of the stars.

Your exertions in this place for the establishment and support of public worship, evince your sense of its importance. Permit me to congratulate you on the success with which your efforts have been crowned. The liberality of your institution does honor to human nature. Like heaven, you receive men of all denominations, without regard to any thing but their goodness. May no standard ever be lifted here to call forth the spirit of party, but may you live together in peace, forbearing and forgiving one another. Let all things be done with decency, prudence and moderation. May you all enjoy the blessings of salvation, and while worshipping your common Parent, enjoy his sensible presence, so that with unfeigned fervor of soul you may exclaim, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." I now commend you to him who is able to keep you, and lead you into all truth. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you.





A  
S E R M O N  
PREACHED IN BOSTON,  
AT THE  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
OF THE  
W A R R E N   A S S O C I A T I O N,  
IN THE  
REV. DR. STILLMAN'S MEETING HOUSE,  
SEPTEMBER 12, A. D. 1797.





## A S E R M O N.

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HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?—

HEBREWS ii. 3.

THE persons for whose conversion, instruction and edification this epistle was written, were Hebrews, the posterity of Abraham, and the only church of God before the introduction of the gospel dispensation.—These Hebrews in the time of the Apostle Paul were distributed into three classes, all differing in their notions of the Chirstian doctrine and worship. The first class consisted of those who had sincerely received and embraced the gospel. These were not disposed to adulterate it with a mixture of Judaism, nor to restrain their liberty by the cumbersome rites of Moses. They believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and that by his incarnation, obedience, death, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and intercession with God, he had completely fulfilled and abolished the shadowy dispensation ; had introduced himself as the only righteousness of God, and commenced a new and glorious era in the economy of man's salvation.

The second class of Hebrews was composed of those who insisted on the necessity of Mosaic rites in conjunction with a profession of faith in Christ. These were of two sorts. The first were those who, not fully understanding the gospel doctrine, continued the observance of their former institutions, with-

out seeking for righteousness by them. The second were those who urged their observance as indispensable for justification before God.

The third general class were those who persisted in their old church state, rejecting the gospel and Jesus of Nazareth. A just view of these several classes of Hebrews, together with their peculiar opinions, and attachments, is an indispensable prerequisite to the right understanding of this epistle. The great Apostle, anxious for the happiness and salvation of his brethren, contends earnestly and faithfully against their ignorance, animosities and prejudice. He attempts to unite them all in the faith of the pure gospel of Christ. To effect this important object, by instructing and establishing the doubtful, by confirming those who had embraced the gospel, and convincing those who had rejected it, he commences the first chapter, by instituting a comparison, between the dispensation of the law and that of the gospel. He points out the circumstances in which they agree and in which they differ. They agree in one great point. God is the author of both. They differ as to the manner, the time, and the persons in whom they were given. God in time past spake unto the fathers by the prophets. In these last days he hath spoken unto us by his Son. If the Hebrews attended to the instructions of God because they were delivered by the prophets; ought they not, on their own principles, much more to attend to the instructions of God delivered by his Son, who was the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person? The Apostle, to give this argument the greatest force, occupies the remaining part of the first chapter in describing the exalted character of Christ. He is represented as being infinitely superior to angels, on account of whose ministration under the law, the Hebrews gloried in that economy. Ought they not then much more to glory in the economy of man's salvation, where Christ himself is mediator, whom the angels themselves are commanded to worship? "Therefore," says Paul, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." This inference he urges upon his brethren, by the consideration, that even under the law where the light was dim,

where no higher beings spake than angels, every offence was strictly marked and punished. How great then must be their guilt, and how unavoidable their punishment, should they neglect the gospel delivered by the Lord himself? No wonder the Apostle exclaimed, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."

In explaining these words, I shall

I. *First*, Show why the gospel is styled salvation.

II. *Secondly*, Why it is styled a great salvation.

III. *Thirdly*, The unavoidable destruction of those who neglect this salvation.

A few observations shall close the subject.

I. *First*, I am to show why the gospel is styled salvation. Several reasons occur; the more immediate of which is, the contrast made by the Apostle between the law and the gospel. The words of the law were stedfast and immovable, denouncing condemnation to the transgressor. The law therefore was the ministration of death, even to those Hebrews, who so tenaciously adhered to its observance. The gospel on the contrary was good news, the ministration of life, and its effect deliverance from sin and the curse of the law. On account therefore of the effect of the gospel in opposition to that of the law, the Apostle styles the gospel salvation.

2. Another reason why the gospel is styled as in the text is, because it alone reveals salvation. The law, it is true, points out the attainment of salvation by perfect obedience to its precepts. Paul says the language of it is, The man that doth these things shall live in them. He at the same time declares, that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. The law therefore, so far from revealing to man salvation in his present state, reveals his condemnation. Paul writing to the Galatians points out the state of men under the law, and the manner in



which they are affected by it. Before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed; wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Many contend that the light of nature is adequate to all the purposes of human instruction and happiness. Of consequence they reject all supernatural revelation, whether in the form of law or gospel as totally unnecessary. On this give me leave to observe that if the light of nature were sufficient, we have no reason to believe that God would give any other, for he does nothing that is useless or unnecessary. On the contrary, if the light of nature were not sufficient, we have reason to believe, he would give more light. To ascertain whether the light of nature is sufficient, we must recur to fact and experience. The whole history of the human race testifies against the assertion, that the light of nature is sufficient to guide men to the true God and happiness. For there never has existed a nation destitute of the revelation contained in the Bible, that were not idolaters, except some tribes who (if travellers may be credited) appear to have no notion of worshipping any thing. Where then are the effects, which ought to have been produced by this light, if it was ordained by God as a sufficient instructor? Why has it not directed all eyes and all hearts to the great Jehovah? Unassisted by revelation, men from the foundation of the world have been stupid idolaters. Though the earth has smiled in beauty under their feet, and the heavens have rolled in majesty over their heads, yet they have remained in "the region and shadow of death." Some of the ancient heathen philosophers appear to have believed in the existence of a supreme God. Their opinions concerning him, however, were so various, contradictory, and frequently absurd, that we cannot affirm that they were acquainted with the true God. By the light of nature they could ascertain with no precision his moral perfections, and of consequence must have remained in doubt respecting the nature of acceptable worship. Socrates the greatest in all heathen antiquity, confesses his ignorance when he says, "It is absolutely necessary that we wait with patience till such time as we can learn certainly how we ought to behave ourselves both

towards God and towards men." The light of nature leaves us in perfect uncertainty, whether God can or will pardon sin. This light therefore is deficient in the most essential and important point respecting sinful beings, for to them nothing can be so interesting as to know whether God will pardon sin and bestow salvation. To the gospel therefore we are wholly indebted for our knowledge of those attributes of God and those determinations of his will, with which our happiness and eternal life are connected. This train of reasoning corresponds with the uniform language of scripture. Paul declares that the gospel is the power of God and the wisdom of God, unto salvation. Rom. i. 16. In the gospel "the grace of God is manifested, that bringeth salvation." Tit. ii. 11. The gospel is good news, glad tidings, a declaration of pardon to the guilty immediately from God, known to him only, depending on his sovereign pleasure, infinitely above the thoughts of men and angels. The manifestation of grace in the salvation of men was determined in the everlasting council of God, "Who," says an apostle, "hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Thus the gospel is with propriety styled salvation, because that alone reveals it.

3. Another reason why the gospel is styled salvation is, because the gospel applies salvation, and is effectual to the deliverance of all those who believe. These assertions are manifest in the following things.

1. In regeneration and sanctification.

These are the first acts in which divine power energizes in the heart, delivering it from the reigning and condemning power of sin. The word of God is like a hammer and fire to break the rock in pieces. The natural state of man is such, that a moral change in his will and affections is essential to qualify him for the enjoyment of God and heaven. The scriptures uniformly represent the unregenerate as totally alienated from things spiritual and holy. Their great adversary blinds them through the deceitfulness of sin, and, soliciting their affections by all the arts and allurements of temptation, involves them in

guilt and exposes them to ruin. Their carnal minds are "enmity against God." In such a state, and possessed of such a disposition, is it possible that heaven should afford them happiness? No. They must be reconciled to God and saved from sin. These are effected by the word of divine truth applied by the Holy Spirit. Thus says the Apostle Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. i. 23. Hence it appears that the word of God becomes a living principle in the hearts of believers. The word is beautifully compared to seed which contains in itself a principle of life. When cast into the earth, nourished by the sun and rain, it expands, shoots up, increases, smiles in beauty, bears fruit, and rejoices the cultivator's heart. Thus the word of God does not return unto him void, but accomplishes that whereunto he sends it. Hence divine truth, considered as a living, abiding principle in the heart, is styled the "ingrafted word." Christ illustrated the same idea when he said, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Paul to the Corinthians said "he had begotten them through the gospel." Sanctification is properly the continuance and increase of regeneration, and is effected by the same means. Thus says Christ, praying for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Thus the gospel applies salvation in regeneration and sanctification.

2. In the next place, it applies it in justification. It is not only necessary that men should be sanctified before they can enjoy heaven, but that they should be exempted from condemnation. As all have incurred the penalty of the law, it becomes an interesting inquiry, how the divine perfections will harmonize in the extension of pardon. God will never exert one of these to the infringement of another. If God has mercy, he at the same time has justice. This justice he has manifested in the law, and has expressed his determination to support it. It may then be asked, If God, instead of inflicting the threatened penalty, forgive the transgressor, will he not render his hatred of sin suspected? Will he not appear to coincide with



the transgressor in contravening the authority of the law? These consequences would result, were pardon exercised without respect to the law. God never can do any thing which will lower his attachment to his law, or diminish his hatred of sin in the eyes of his creatures. According to the gospel scheme, mercy does not interfere with justice; nor can it, since he who receives pardon receives it in such a way, that he entertains as strong a conviction of the divine displeasure against sin, as he would were he doomed to endure the full punishment of transgression. The gospel exhibits Christ in the character of an obedient and suffering Saviour. His obedience and sufferings were voluntary. Their language was, The law is holy, just and good. It ought to be obeyed. It ought to be supported as an unalterable rule of righteousness. Hence the mediatorial work of Christ, so far as it respected obedience and suffering, rendered the exercise of mercy consistent with every end that could have been obtained by the rigid punishment of all transgressors. Hence an inspired Apostle says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Why to every one that believeth? Because he who believes acknowledges and realizes that he ought to suffer what Christ suffered, and to obey as Christ obeyed. Hence when pardon is experienced, the law is acknowledged to be holy, just, and good; its authority is fully established as it could have been by the execution of its penalty, and obedient subjects are secured. Hence it appears, that in the pardon of sinners on account of Christ, every end of the most perfect moral government is answered. Hence God is just, though he justifies the ungodly. He is a just God and yet a Saviour. On account of the perfect consistency between justice and grace in the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, his righteousness is said to be imputed unto them. That is, they are justified on account of his righteousness, with as much propriety as they would be if that righteousness were personally their own. All that the rectitude of the divine nature requires, is obtained and manifested by the pardon and justification of sinners on account of Christ. Hence they are said to be "made the righteousness of God in him." Thus the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, and those

to whom it is thus imputed are adjudged to eternal life, and treated, as to the law, as if they had never sinned. What a glorious scheme of salvation is this, which condemns sin, saves the sinner, supports the divine law, and glorifies the divine character ! The penitent sinner, beholding the great deep of God's wisdom and goodness breaking open in Christ, with ecstasy exclaims, " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! "

3. The gospel also applies salvation in deliverance from evil and in the bestowment of eternal happiness.

Thus the gospel scheme appears complete, securing every thing that can satisfy the desires of immortal spirits. It not only begins but it finishes salvation. It pardons, regenerates, sanctifies, justifies, and bestows eternal life. This all true believers will joyfully realize at the great day of judgment, when the divine Master shall address them, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. "

Thus it appears that the gospel is with propriety styled salvation, whether we consider it in opposition to the law, or as revealing and applying salvation.

II. I now proceed, secondly, To show why the gospel is styled a great salvation. Among the various reasons which might be adduced to illustrate this part of the subject, I shall mention the following only.

1. This salvation will appear great if we consider the evil from which it delivers and the good which it bestows. All evil is comprised in sin, its consequences, and its punishment. Sin is a great evil with respect to its immediate effects upon the soul. It corrupts the affections, alienates them from God, and renders them averse to things spiritual and divine. In sin originate all those vile passions which degrade and dishonor human nature. In the same source arise, blindness of mind, selfishness, idolatry, superstition and error. These deform the noble workmanship of God, and rob it of all its primeval glory. If to be formed in the image of God ; if to possess rectitude and holiness ; if freely to converse with Heaven ; if to be exempt from

toil, disappointment, sorrow, pain and death; if these were blessings; surely since sin despoils us of the whole, it must be an evil exceedingly great and alarming. Must not that then be a great salvation which disenthalls us from slavery, restores us to divine favor, and blesses us with that peace which passeth all understanding? The gospel "proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them who are bound." Christ was "called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins." He begins the reign of his grace in their hearts on earth, and will complete it in heaven. The salvation of the gospel is not only great as it destroys the dominion of sin in the heart, but as it delivers from the punishment of sin. This punishment is the curse of the law, which undoubtedly comprises endless misery. From this all those who believe will be saved. For "Christ was made under the law, that he might redeem them from its curse." He is to them "the end of the law for righteousness." "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Will they not then consider that as a great salvation which delivers them from condemnation, from endless, inexpressible woe? God forbid that they should ever cease to rejoice in it, and to adore the exceeding riches of divine grace! But the salvation of the gospel does not leave its subjects in a state of mere exemption from misery; it bestows on them positive endless happiness. If that can be a great salvation which restores man from the greatest evil, and bestows on him the greatest good; which blesses him with the enjoyment of God and Christ, with the society of all holy beings, and secures all these to him through the immeasurable range of eternity, the gospel must be a great salvation.

2. This salvation will appear great if we consider the means by which it is accomplished. These are the following.

1. The incarnation of Christ. This was a wonderful instance of divine wisdom and love. This was the great mystery into which the angels desired to look. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. But why was it necessary that the eternal Son of God should assume our nature to effect our sal-



vation? Why was not an angel commissioned on this business? Because no finite being possessed sufficient dignity, or comprised in its nature a sufficient quantity of existence, to render that obedience and endure that suffering which were necessary to give such a clear manifestation of God's attachment to his law, and of his aversion to sin, as would render the exercise of mercy consistent. As the human nature had deviated from the divine law, it was proper and fit, that that nature should be brought back into the person of the Saviour to a coincidence with the law. In this way the Saviour would give a most convincing evidence of the goodness of the law, and in consequence of his infinite dignity would establish the law forever, as a standard of obedience. Besides, the assumption of the human nature, into union with the divine, was a most unequivocal pledge of God's love and grace; and has left all sinners without excuse who do not obey the gospel. God in the human nature assumed, has familiarized himself to his creatures; and encouraged them to approach him. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise also himself took part of the same." "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

2. In the obedience of Christ. Christ not only assumed the human nature, but he assumed it under the law. This it was necessary he should do in order to effect man's redemption. Because man was not only under the condemning but obligatory power of the law. This Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. But how could it be fulfilled unless the obedience it required were rendered? Christ; "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience." It is contended by some that Christ was not made under the moral law, but under the law of redemption. This law of redemption is explained to mean the condition of the mediatory work assigned by the Father. If so, this law of redemption is the same as the covenant of grace, which included Christ's obedience to the moral law. Paul writing to the Galatians says, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." And also, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse

of the law, being made a curse for us." We are under the curse of no law, except that of the moral law, and yet the scriptures assure us, that Christ was made under this, that he might redeem us from it. When we consider the great difficulties, dangers and temptations to be encountered by the Saviour in the course of his humiliation and obedience, and when we consider that in all he gloriously triumphed ; we are compelled to acknowledge, that the salvation which he effected was exceedingly great.

3. Another mean by which this salvation was accomplished was the sufferings of Christ. In his obedience he had not entered on the most arduous part of the work assigned him by his Father, for the accomplishment of man's salvation. It was not only necessary that he should become human, that he should obey the law, but that he should endure its penalty. Without this, the law could not be fulfilled nor its curse removed, so as to render the transgressor's deliverance possible. "It was essential to a consistent exercise of pardon, that in some visible expression God's real disposition towards sinners should be manifested as clearly, fully and unequivocally, as it would be in the execution of the penalty of the law on the transgressor. This disposition, when brought into view in some sensible manifestation, vindicates God's character from all suspicion, and fully discovers his attachment to the rights of his government, the dignity of his justice and the truth of his law." Hence it is said in the scriptures, "It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." These sufferings were so exceedingly dreadful, that the Saviour in the view of them cried out, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"

4. But in suffering and dying, Jesus had not completed this great salvation, it was necessary that he should rise from the dead. In doing this he obtained a complete victory over death and the grave. "God raised him up, having loosed the pains of death." Christ by his resurrection completed the great plan of redemption, "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." From this consideration arises our only hope

of pardon and acceptance with God : for, says Paul, " If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins." Thus it appears, from the consideration that God sent his beloved Son into the world to be invested with our nature, to be made under the law, that he might obey, suffer and die, and rise and ascend into heaven, that the salvation he effected must have been great beyond all conception.

5. This salvation appears great from the consideration that it contains the highest display of divine wisdom and goodness.

When man has sinned, there appeared a repugnancy between his salvation and the divine perfections. The holiness, justice, truth and goodness of God were all engaged for the punishment of transgression. How shall these be preserved and manifested, if the transgression be pardoned ? Does it appear consistent, that God should form a rational being, give him a law for the regulation of his conduct, annex a penalty to that law, threaten the execution of its penalty in case of transgression ; and when transgression is committed, pardon it, restore the transgressor to favor, and bestow on him eternal life ? Where is the harmony of the divine conduct ? Can angels discover it ? Can they devise a way for man's deliverance ? Will they not at once perceive that it is of infinitely greater importance to preserve the glory of the divine nature, than to save sinners ? They may weep for the fate of man, but they cannot retrieve it. Bending from their bright abodes they exclaim, " O man ! how art thou fallen ! Once innocent, now guilty ; once the lord of creation, now the prisoner of death ; farewell. Thy salvation ceases forever !" But God infinite in wisdom, devised a scheme for the salvation of apostate creatures, which, instead of obscuring, displays the divine glory. In this scheme there is, according to the scriptures, the highest display of divine wisdom. It is emphatically styled " the wisdom of God." " In Christ, who is the life and soul of the gospel, are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." This salvation will appear conspicuously great, if we reflect that it was designed in eternity by God himself as the greatest of all his works ; a work to which all others are but subordinate parts, and for the completion of which they were all made, arranged and directed. Thus this salvation appears



great, if we consider the evil from which it delivers ; the good which it bestows ; the means by which it is accomplished ; or the display which it contains of divine wisdom and goodness.

III. I now proceed to show the unavoidable destruction of those who neglect this salvation. This the apostle more immediately infers from the greatness of the salvation neglected. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" To illustrate the proposition now before us, let us attend to the following things.

1. The destruction or endless punishment of those who neglect the salvation of the gospel, will be unavoidable, because it will be just and reasonable.

The scriptures represent men to be in a state of alienation from God. They desire not the knowledge of his ways, nor do they wish to submit to his government. If they continue in this state, their happiness is utterly impossible. They only are the losers, by opposing God. He is all-sufficient, independent, and perfectly happy without them. He is under no obligation to effect their salvation, nor have they any reason to complain should he leave them to "reap the fruit of their doings." But God, so far from doing this, makes to them overtures of salvation. He proposes to them a treaty of peace and reconciliation. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Thus the self-moving love of the infinite Jehovah proposes to sinners a scheme for their reconciliation and happiness. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If sinners then slight, oppose, and despise the love of God, will not their destruction be reasonable and just ? May it not with propriety be said to them, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish ?" Shall the eternal Son of God lay aside the glory which he had before the world was ? Shall he descend to our dark, sinful, rebellious world ? Shall he descend so low as to assume our nature ? Shall he put himself under the law by which we were

condemned ? Shall he become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ? Shall he be persecuted and despised ? Shall he be lifted from the earth, agonize and die upon the cross ? Shall he, in this awful situation, pray for his enemies ? Shall he be buried ? Shall he rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, pleading for sinners by his wounded hands and pierced side ? In addition to all these, shall he invite sinners by the ministers of his word ? Shall he admonish them by his Spirit and providence ? Shall the Son of God do all these things for them ? And can they, if they neglect him, expect to escape ? How perfectly just will be their destruction !

2. Their destruction will be unavoidable, because they reject the only thing that can save them. It has been shown in the first part of this discourse, that men cannot obtain salvation by the law. It has also been shown that the light of nature is utterly insufficient for this purpose. Universal experience evinces, that no merely human exertions can destroy the reigning power of sin. God in his infinite mercy has sent his only Son to redeem and save his creature man. In this God has displayed the triumphs of his wisdom. "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." The preaching of the cross is the great mean ordained by Heaven, for the salvation of mortals. "There is none other name than that of Jesus, given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." "He is the way, the truth and the life." "No man can come unto the Father but by him." "He is the only Mediator between God and men." Without his interposition, mercy would have rested eternally in the bosom of God, with respect to men, as well as with respect to apostate angels. For these, no remedy was provided, no fountain of grace was opened. "For Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." If then sinners will neglect this distinguishing goodness of God ; if they will refuse to comply with the overtures of his grace in Christ, where only they are to be found, how can they escape ? Their destruction follows as a necessary consequence of their own conduct. They not only sin against the law, but against the gospel. Their guilt is ag-

gravated by a consideration of the superabounding grace contained in the gospel which they neglect. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for their sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"

3. The destruction of those who neglect the gospel will be unavoidable, because God hath declared it. Had the scriptures given us no farther information concerning the destruction of those who neglect the gospel, than that it would be just and right, we could not with absolute certainty infer that it would take place. Because many things concerning sinners may be right and just, which God will not perform. It is right and just that all men without exception, as to their own personal demerit, should be destroyed, or should endure the penalty of the law; but this will not be the case; for the scripture declares, "He that believeth shall be saved." It does not however follow, that there is any disregard to justice in saving those who believe. Neither on the other hand is there any disregard to mercy in destroying those who disbelieve. Their destruction could not with absolute certainty be inferred from his justice. But in an affair of such vast importance, God has not left us in uncertainty, but has given us the most clear and unequivocal information. "He that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Passages to the same import, are too numerous to be here mentioned. Were there none but these, there would be ample reason for the solicitous and important inquiry in the text—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Having explained the several things [proposed, I shall close the subject by observing:

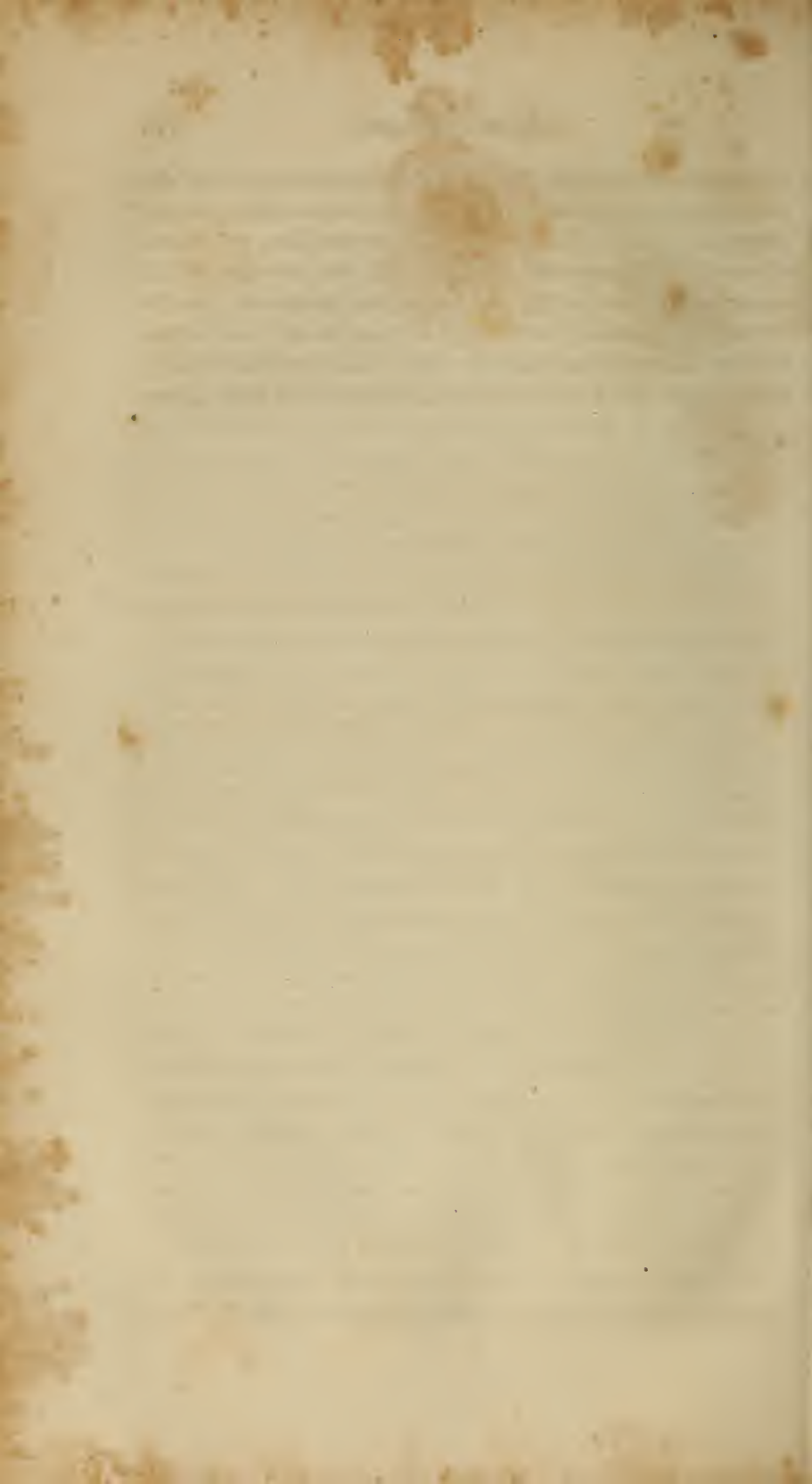
1. First, Since the gospel is such, that it alone reveals and applies salvation, and is effectual to our deliverance from all evil



and bestows all good ; we ought to admire the infinite grace of Jehovah. This grace brings salvation which delivers us from eternal ruin. In this salvation are the riches of God's grace, the treasures of his wisdom, and the greatness of his power. If we have been brought by the Holy Spirit to know and enjoy this salvation, let us continue to rejoice in it, purifying ourselves from all iniquity, and devoting ourselves to Him who died for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Let us remember that he ever liveth to make intercession for us ; that he will soon appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Then the vicissitudes of time will cease to disturb us ; the great adversary of our souls will be bound forever ; all tears shall be wiped from every eye, we shall be wholly delivered from the bondage of corruption, be received into glory, forever to solace ourselves in the enjoyment of GOD.

2. Secondly, Since those who neglect the gospel neglect the greatest good and incur the greatest evil, men ought above all things to be solicitous about their salvation. To neglect the gospel, is to neglect God himself ; to abuse his mercy, and affront his justice. In order to avoid the imputation of neglecting the gospel, it is not enough, that you read the scriptures, that you attend the preached word, and perform a regular course of religious duties ; you must sincerely embrace and love the Lord Jesus. You must receive him as a Prophet to instruct you, as a Priest to expiate your guilt, and as a King to govern you. If you neglect the gospel, you neglect the only thing that can save you. If you neglect Jesus, you neglect him who has the power of death and life. He will not always set on the mediatorial throne ; he will not always invite you by his mercy and admonish you by his Spirit. If you neglect him, if you remain impenitent, he will execute upon you the righteous indignation of Jehovah. How dreadful must be your situation ! How will you escape, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel ? That Jesus, whom you now despise, will then be honored ; that Jesus, who was once crowned with thorns, will then be crowned with glory ; that Jesus, who was once dressed in a robe of derision, will then

be invested with all the splendors of Omnipotence. He who was arraigned at the bar of Pilate, will then be exalted on the throne of heaven. How then can you neglect him, and expect to escape with impunity? Despise not the overtures of his mercy, neglect not his great salvation, but embrace it, that he who will be your final Judge may be your friend, and receive you into his everlasting kingdom. May God grant that this may be the happy lot of us all, through JESUS our LORD. *Amen.*





A  
S E R M O N  
PREACHED IN THE  
BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE IN PROVIDENCE,  
BEFORE THE  
FEMALE CHARITABLE SOCIETY,  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1802.

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## A SERMON.

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THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS,  
AND HAVE NOT CHARITY, I AM NOTHING.—1 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 2.

CHARITY is an exalted virtue. As it implies love to God, and man, it connects us with heaven and earth, and prepares us for both. Involving the most laudable and vigorous propensity of our nature, it is commensurate with our existence. Charity in its full extent comprises all true religion. So far as it respects active beneficence to our fellow creatures, it will cease with time ; so far as it respects holy affection to our creator, it will glow with a flame which eternal ages cannot extinguish. Many of the christian gifts and graces are limited to the present world. No mansions are allotted them in heaven, because, there they can have no exercise, no use, and no object. "Charity never faileth ; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." "Now abideth faith, hope, charity ; these three, but the greatest of these is charity." Faith and hope, live and grow by the absence and remoteness of their objects. These virtues of course must be absorbed and lost in enjoyment. Charity is greater. Derived from God and fixed upon him ;



having diffused its blessings on earth, it will return to him, and increase forever. This great virtue, as it is displayed in relieving the distressed, is an extension of divine love. It assimilates the possessor to God himself, who bestows good because he delights in mercy. Charity or love exalts the soul above the malevolent, angry passions, and tends to unite the whole race of man in one happy fraternity. It disarms hatred of its poison and revenge of its dagger. Genuine charity does not extend relief to the inoffensive only. No, with a godlike superiority it triumphs over malignity itself; blesses those who curse, does good to those who hate, and prays for those who abuse and persecute. Charity has the happiness of man for its object, and the glory of God for its end. It aspires after immortality, not in the naked solitudes of metaphysic faith, nor in the cloistered retirement of monkish indolence; but in the practice of benevolence; in drying up the tears, and healing the wounds of afflicted, unfortunate, perishing humanity. "Shew me," said an inspired apostle, "thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." These are the true, the only infallible index of the heart.—These alone will stand the trial in that tremendous hour when the hearts of all shall be laid open to view, and the destiny of all shall be irrevocably fixed by the impartial judge of the universe. Virtues which are always boasting of their own importance, but never appear; modes of faith which no ingenuity can reduce to practice; mysteries, which no intellect can develop; are of no consequence in comparison of glowing, active virtue. Could we take up the Alps in one hand and the Andes in the other, and plunge them into the ocean; could we with Bacon look through and comprehend all science; or with Newton unveil the laws and mechanism of the universe; and still be destitute of charity, of benevolent affection; we might be objects of terror and of admiration, but could not be the subjects of those attractive qualities which crown human nature with its highest glory. From misguided ambition, from obstinate bigotry, or fanatical superstition, we might give our bodies to be burned, expecting, like the Phoenix, to rise into life from our own ruin; but unless we have good works to present us to our heavenly father, we shall never receive the transporting bene-

diction, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." From viewing the exalted rank and the importance of charity, we may with propriety adopt the language of our text;—"Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have no charity, I am nothing."

The practice of charity as a duty, is urged upon us by the consideration, that it weakens the principle of evil and strengthens the principle of virtue.

Selfishness is the source of all moral evil. Mankind considered collectively constitute an important system in the universe of being. They are so connected with each other, by mutual dependence, and the necessity of mutual aid, that the good of each individual is essentially involved in the good of the whole. Of course the highest common interest demands the highest and chief regard of each individual. It cannot be conceived in what sin or moral evil consists, unless it is in that which contravenes this highest common interest; in the preference of individual to public good and happiness. If each individual pursues exclusively his own welfare; if he invariably make this his highest object, he breaks asunder the bond of public union; and his conduct tends directly to introduce disorder and misery. His love of himself fills him with ambition, avarice and cruelty. His heart becomes a stranger to compassion. His ear is closed against the cry of distress. Increase of his wealth produces an increase of oppression. With him, justice, mercy and humanity are empty names. Fearful of loss and eager of gain, he indulges a restless suspicion, and spurs himself on with unrelenting perseverance. He loads the victims of his selfishness with heavier chains, and makes the lash resound on his slave, with a louder noise. The love of himself finally gains a complete ascendancy, and he is poor in the midst of wealth. Immoderate self-love is the source of all the wickednesses and vices of mankind. Hence we see the reason why avarice, pride, anger, and revenge are censured as enormous evils, and threatened with the heaviest punishments. Hence also, we may see the true reason why we are required to love our neighbor as ourselves; to exercise the same kind of concern for his welfare

as for our own. Did all comply with these things, society would assume an appearance, new and beautiful ; and each individual would be safe and happy in the safety and happiness of all. It must surely then be our duty to exert ourselves in beneficence and kindness. The principle of self-preservation is so powerful, that we allow it to degenerate into immoderate self-affection. Nothing so effectually prevents this as attention to objects of distress, and an indulgence of those dispositions and actions which contribute to their relief. We are so constituted as to be susceptible of moral, intellectual and corporeal habits. These, experience evinces, are all strengthened by a repetition of those acts which produce them. The practice of charity, therefore, as it allows others a share in our affections as well as ourselves, destroys self-love ; and of course weakens the principle of evil. From the same consideration it appears that the practice of charity strengthens the principle of virtue. He who is governed by this, steadily aims at the greatest good, with a decided preference of those means by which it is promoted. He aims at human happiness, by the relief of human wretchedness ; and finds his reward in the strength of his own virtue, and in the applause of his own conscience.

As an additional incentive to the practice of charity, God has annexed to it a sensible degree of pleasure. This he has done to allure us to our duty, by applying to the strongest principle of our nature, love of happiness. He has not left us to toil and labor, wholly from an expectation of some distant, future good, but has annexed a proper proportion of enjoyment to our present exertions. It is a peculiar and distinguishing property of virtuous exercises, that the pleasures they produce, never terminate in satiety or disgust. On the contrary, these pleasures become more intense, more exquisite by indulgence, and instead of debilitating, invigorate the capacity of enjoyment. God has so constituted and situated man, that it is absolutely out of his power to do good without being paid for it. The practice of beneficence, is his most sublime happiness, and his highest interest. Virtue always brings a great reward with her, and points to a greater. Let experience speak. Is there no luxury in do-



ing good? Is there no transport in relieving the indigent and distressed? Do no thrills of pleasure vibrate through the heart in wiping the tear from orphan wretchedness? In the glow of compassion for the unfortunate, in the bestowment of bounty for the happiness of God's creatures, does not the light of heaven break in upon the mind, and the voice of a thousand angels call us up to that blessed mansion?

Passing by present enjoyment as a motive to the practice of charity, we may exhibit another from our situation. We are all connected by desires, distresses and necessities. All are more or less dependent, from the sceptre of power, to rags of beggary. And though it may mortify his pride, it is true, "The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear." Neither the fortification of power; nor the splendor of wealth; neither the valor of the hero, nor the wisdom of the sage, can always guard against misfortune. Misery that needs relief, creeps in at a thousand avenues. When the aged building shakes in the tempest, how welcome is the arm of strength! Disease and death level all human grandeur in the dust. Our situation is such, that it seems designed by Deity, to allow full scope for the exercise of beneficence. We are surrounded with objects of distress, and are constantly liable to become such ourselves. God has seen fit, to permit much evil and much misery. It is undoubtedly better that this should be the case, than that such beings as men should not exist. Had we formed a world for ourselves, we should doubtless have excluded from it all suffering and sorrow. We should have banished the triumph of the tomb and the terror of death. We should have spread under our feet a carpet of flowers, and stretched over our heads a sky forever brightening with a vernal sun. But God who is infinite in wisdom has formed for us a world in which we are liable to numberless evils, and has appealed to the sense of our wants to enforce our duty. The great rule of conduct enjoined upon us by christianity, is that we should do unto others, as we would have them do unto us, were circumstances exchanged. This rule results from our dependence and accords with the fitness of things. As it is an appeal to our senses and our judgment, we can neither mistake its meaning nor its application. If we behold others in distress

we have only to imagine their situation our own. Our feelings will then speak the language of truth. Selfishness is apt officiously to intrude and persuade us that our charity will never be repaid, that we must take care of ourselves, and that generosity to the poor is needless profusion. In such a case we should remember, that we are in the hand of God ; that all we possess is from him ; that he arranges and controls every thing concerning us, and that under his all-comprehending providence, a breath of wind, a wave of the ocean, a spark of fire, or the falling of a tile, may ruin all our enjoyments, and rob us of all our possessions. No man ever lost, by doing good. No man was ever made a beggar for discharging his duty in obedience to the will of God.

Another motive urging upon us the practice of charity as our duty, arises from the principle of sympathy. From the constitution of our nature we can deduce the will of our maker, and our own obligations. For surely a being of infinite wisdom never acts in vain ; he never bestows on his creatures powers and propensities, which are not designed for some valuable end. From surveying these, from observing their tendency, and the objects to which they are adapted, we infer the design of their author. Whatever feelings appear to be universal and permanent in our nature, were undoubtedly bestowed for the increase of human happiness ; and ought, under the direction of reason and the precepts of religion, to be encouraged and indulged for this important purpose. Our internal constitution is wonderfully adapted to our external condition. Objects are incessantly crowding upon our senses, and rousing into exercise our propensities according to the laws of our nature. On these alone, can we be inspired with a sense of duty, and impressed with the awful sanctions of religion. As to what concerns us in our present state God does not operate above us and beyond our reach : He does not require us to act from incomprehensible motives : He has not hung up our duty between heaven and earth, but has wrought it into our natures. Though the divine glory is the noblest and most exalted end of human action, yet it may be doubted, whether in most cases this can be the immediate motive to action : for our faculties are so circumscribed, that we

are soon lost in the contemplation of infinite perfection, and involved in uncertainty as to the means which will most effectually display it. Action may be necessary in many cases, where reason cannot have time to operate, and if it could, would never be able to determine. God has therefore wisely implanted within us certain propensities to remind us of our duty ; and applies to these by the events of his Providence and the declarations of his word. Why does a generous, magnanimous, disinterested action inspire us with pleasure, command our applause, and excite our emulation ? Why does the prospect of affliction, pain and distress, render us uneasy, and fill us with sympathy and compassion ? Are not these things thus ordained to teach us our obligations, and to rouse us to those actions which will diminish human calamity and increase human happiness ? The principle of sympathy interests us in the sufferings and enjoyments of all animals, especially of those of our own species. The impulse of this principle, is the main-spring of every effort to relieve distress and misery. As an additional incitement to benevolence, God has annexed to sympathy pleasure and pain ; pleasure, where you can afford relief, and pain where you cannot. There has not been a charitable institution, in any period of time, on any part of the globe which has not owed its origin, progress, and continuance to sympathy. This principle ranks among the highest ornaments of our nature. Its improvement is of so much importance, that probably in every instance, where we are sure there is want or misery, we ought to bestow charity, and leave the event to divine providence. We seem to be, instinctively, so impressed with the idea, that a disposition to assist the indigent and unfortunate is a part of our nature, that we look with horror on him who has no compassion, and consider him as an exotic, anomalous production. If we will listen to the voice of nature, we must be impelled to the exercise of charity whenever we behold poverty, want, affliction, distress and pain.

Another motive to the exercise of charity is the express injunction of God himself, and the reward he has promised to those who obey.



Knowing our disposition to selfishness in our present fallen state, and our propensity to become insensible to the cries of misery, he has, with a view to keep alive and invigorate the original principles of our nature, addressed us in the authoritative voice of revelation. He has left virtue in no quarter unsupported. He has given us line upon line, and precept on precept. He has addressed man in his internal constitution ; in his external condition ; and through his reason and senses. "If thy brother be waxen poor, then thou shalt relieve him that he may live." "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand against thy poor brother—the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore I command thee." Such is the language of inspiration. God has promised his blessing to those who exercise charity in relieving distress. "The liberal soul shall be made fat ;"—"he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he ;"—"he that hath a bountiful eye, blessed is he." "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity." Temporal prosperity will undoubtedly attend those who obey the commands of God, in the liberal distribution of their property, for the assistance of his creatures. The rewards of time however are small in comparison with those of eternity. Deeds of charity and kindness will be exhibited at the day of judgment, as titles to immortal glory. The Saviour and Judge will then address the righteous. "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked and ye clothed me ; I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came unto me."

The duty of charity, or benevolence, is urged upon us by the example of our Saviour. His disinterested affection, has added authority to obligation and loveliness to virtue. Such is the consent in moral association, that an example of consummate goodness, pervades, assimilates and links together the universe of intelligent beings. All feel the force and revere the majesty of exemplary active virtue. The Saviour, though he was rich,

yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Though we were enemies; and by transgression had torn asunder the obligations of gratitude and love, yet so ardent was his affection, that he died for our salvation. He was a perfect character. His love beamed from the height of heaven, and brought light and life and glory to the sons of woe. He disrobed himself of the splendors of Deity, quitted the mansions of bliss, denied himself that unutterable felicity which he enjoyed with his father, veiled himself in humanity, assumed the sorrows and infirmities of an inimical and ruined world. In the form of a servant, despised and rejected of men, he went about doing good, instructing the ignorant, relieving the distressed, pardoning the penitent, blessing his enemies, and allying himself by the strongest ties to the forlorn, disconsolate sons and daughters of woe. In him was no oppressive spirit, no unfeeling heart. His tears dropped on the sins of men, and blotted them out forever. Angels bending from their bright abodes beheld their lord in misery, and, arrested by the display of his compassion, melted into sympathetic virtue. His love bound death in chains, and strewed the tomb with flowers. He gave his life for the miserable; and when he bowed his head on Calvary, rose into the splendors of immortal life, and bade them follow. Surely the perfect example of the Son of God, ought to arrest our attention and engage all our powers in the cause of benevolence.

It appears from the preceding discourse that charity ranks among the most exalted virtues; that it adds lustre and dignity to human character. The practice, therefore, of charity involves at once our interest, our duty and our happiness. These are motives too powerful to be resisted. They apply to the strongest propensities of our nature, and must produce active beneficence, in every one, whose humanity has not been sacrificed at the shrine of avarice. Hard indeed is that heart which cannot feel for another's woe! On this occasion, the children of adversity and want solicit your charity. The sigh of the disconsolate widow, and the faltering voice of age, reach your ears. Orphan infancy, dropping tears, stretches forth its little hands to

receive your bounty. Humanity pleads her own cause, and must be heard. We are not convened to celebrate the subversion of tyrants, nor the triumphs of liberty. These agitate the soul with fear, with terror and enthusiastic triumph. They present to our imagination the confused noise of battle, fields bathed in blood, heaps of slain, the shouts of the victors, and the groans of the dying. From these we retire. We delight ourselves in exercising the humane, benevolent feelings. Our hearts are attracted by a society, designed to relieve misery and increase happiness; a society originating in benevolence, embracing all that is amiable in disposition, all that is ornamental and attractive in character. Generosity, that impressive and commanding virtue, clothed in the resistless charms of female loveliness, here takes her residence. May her enlivening spirit breath through this assembly, and produce the most liberal beneficence.

Let us remember, that the motives to charity are weighty, and its rewards ample. By indulging a disposition to relieve and assist our fellow creatures, we strengthen our own virtue, and increase our own pleasures. We fortify ourselves against the calamities incident to our situation, and cultivate our humanity, by exercising our sympathy. That God whose we are, and to whose august tribunal we are amenable for our conduct, has laid upon us the injunctions of charity, and enforced them by the example of his own son.

Let us then, with cheerfulness discharge our duty. Let us realize our affinity to the whole human race, and while we contemplate their miseries, give the reins to all our benevolent, sympathetic feelings. Though God has permitted sin and sorrow and death to triumph in the present state of things, for the exercise of our virtue and the display of his mercy, yet he has assured us that the time shall arrive when, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying." The sun of righteousness will then beam on the picture of man's existence, chasing from it every cloud, bringing forth all its beauties, and covering it with glory. Benevolence will then wield her sceptre, and



bend all hearts to her control. This fair goddess descends from the skies veiled in a shower of roses. The gales of spring, fresh from the Paradise of God, lift the wings of ten thousand angels to attend her. The bending heavens brighten with her glory, and the exulting earth moves forward to admire her beauty. At her approach, the horrors of the dungeon vanish; oppression drops his rattling chain; grim avarice sinks into the dark recesses of the globe; orphan wretchedness, and pining poverty, forget their care, and smile with grateful joy.

While we feel and recognize the motives and obligations of our duty, let us remember, that though our present situation may be prosperous and happy, yet the time may arrive when we shall need that bounty, which we are now called on to bestow. In such an event may we not confidently hope, that God, in whose hands we are, will pour upon us in reversion our deeds of charity? In this assembly, I behold hearts throbbing with sensibility, and countenances brightening with benevolence. Remember that, on this, as on all other occasions, your humanity must be measured by your generosity. May all our exertions engage in the cause of benevolence. May that embalming spirit of sympathy, which was deposited, in the breast of the first *Fair*, pervade us, and the whole world, and unite us in one great, indissoluble and happy fraternity.



A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED ON LORD'S DAY.

OCTOBER 1, 1812.

AT THE HIGH HILLS OF SANTEE,

BEFORE THE

CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING.





## A S E R M O N.

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THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD  
JESUS CHRIST.—1 CORINTHIANS XV. 57.

SIN is the only origin of all evil, natural and moral. It has divested man of his primitive glory, alienated him from God, and subjected him to suffering and death. The divine laws are all good, and in their nature calculated to promote and secure the highest happiness of all intelligent beings. Of course, these laws, if always and fully obeyed, would forever exclude from the universe, all sin and misery. Supreme love to God, is the essence of all true virtue; and the end of this, is happiness. The divine will or law, is therefore, the standard of virtue, and the rule of action for all rational, voluntary agents. These, therefore may with certainty calculate, that their ultimate happiness, will be exactly proportionate to their virtue in principle and practice. As conformity to the law of God, produces virtue and happiness, so disconformity to it, produces sin and misery. Hence, all evil has originated in the mutability and defection of the creature, and not in an insufficiency of divine benevolence; much less in a positive, divine influence. All evils, both moral and physical, are so many evidences of the sin and degradation of man. He is now in a state of exile; in a land of bondage; an enemy to God, and to himself. All the evils of his troublesome, evanescent life, are comprised in sin and

pain. These he constantly feels. His soul is filled with unhallowed desires, and with ungovernable appetites, at war with his reason and conscience. Agitated by a thousand restless activities, he wanders abroad in this valley of desolation, dissatisfied with the present, tormented by the past, and anxious for the future. Born to trouble, he is a prey to himself, to others, and to all the elements of nature. Here he pines in poverty and famine; there he languishes in wealth and luxury; there, under the reign of liberty, he rushes into vice and licentiousness; there, under the stern sceptre of despotism, he sinks into a brute, and groans under the iron hand of oppression. In every part of the globe, through every period of life, he is exposed to evils which he cannot elude, and to injuries which he cannot redress. He perpetually pants after a happiness which he cannot find. Every object in creation, however alluring to his senses and imagination, fades away under his touch. For him, the privacy of retirement soon loses its charms; public honors wither on his brow; and all the pomp of grandeur sinks beneath him. He is indeed like "the troubled ocean, which cannot rest." All things animate and inanimate; every hope and every joy; health and sickness; poverty and wealth; all within and all without; every virtue and every vice; all proclaim the wretchedness, the guilt and impotence of man. He takes up his life in sorrow, carries it on in trouble, and lays it down in death. But shall he forever lie under the bondage of corruption? Shall the ceaseless flight of ages serve only to augment and perpetuate his misery? Shall not all those who believe in Christ, spring up from death vigorous and immortal? They will be more than conquerors through him who hath loved them, and will triumphantly exclaim, "Thanks be to God! who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

From these words, I shall exhibit the reasons of the christian's triumph over sin and death.

*First.* He has evidence that he is liberated from the reigning power of sin.

The scriptures represent the unregenerate as in a state of servitude, and wholly governed by the principle of evil. "There



is none righteous, no, not one." "There is none that understandeth ; there is none that seeketh after God." "They are all gone out of the way ; they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good ; no, not one." Christ said, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Every thought of the imagination of man's heart, was pronounced by God, to be evil continually. "The heart of the wicked is fully set in him to do evil." The Apostle John says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." The prevalence of evil in the heart of man, is represented in Scripture, as a kingdom, as a dominion, as a tyranny. Hence the apostle Paul speaks of sin as "reigning unto death." To those therefore, who continue in a state of nature, there is no hope of salvation and no cause of triumph. They are liable to receive "the wages of sin, which is death." It is the excellency of the gospel, that it brings into the souls of men, a principle of spiritual life, delivering them from the bondage of sin, and inspiring them with hopes of future felicity. To this Christ had respect, when he said, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." To the same transit from the bondage of sin, Paul had reference, when he said, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." He declares, that they "were by nature, children of wrath even as others ;" and adds, "But God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." To the same purpose he says to the Corinthians, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The real christian therefore, is one who has experienced a renovation of heart ; who has the witness in himself ; who knows in whom he has believed, and rejoices that "because Christ lives, he shall live also." He realizes what the apostle Paul said to the Romans, "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together with him. The believer has abundant reason to triumph over sin and death, because he feels the power of Christ in his heart ; and has assurance, by the earnest of the spirit ; that he shall be delivered

from the bondage of corruption, and no more be brought "into captivity to the law of sin. He considers natural death as a wise and necessary appointment in the divine economy. He considers the second death as the just punishment of sin, and is assured that on him, that death shall have no power. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and while he feels the power of the world to come, he exclaims in the triumphant language of truth, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is by knowing him in the power of his resurrection ; it is by receiving his testimony ; it is by obeying his command ; that we can rise above the infirmity of our reason and our senses, and possess a hope full of ardor, full of immortality. He who has fled to the Saviour for refuge, who has really believed on him according to the Scriptures, can view sin and death as vanquished enemies. He views death as the destruction of all his sin and sorrow ; he stands aloft on the mountain of God, and with a confidence which no danger can shake, and an ecstasy which no language can express, exclaims, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Secondly,* Another reason of the christian's triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has, that he is justified through Christ, and acquitted from condemnation.

Sin is the only thing which has ever rendered men obnoxious to divine justice, and exposed them to punishment. Hence we can entertain no hope of exemption from misery, unless we are pardoned by a special act of divine favor. Pardon implies the remission of punishment which may be justly inflicted. Hence pardon supposes and implies an acquittal from condemnation. The believer is made sensible of the remission of his sins, for "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost." He is brought into the state in which the apostle represents the Corinthians, when they had embraced the gospel ; "but ye are washed ; but ye are sanctified ; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."

The apostle explains and enforces the true import of our text in the words of the subsequent verse—"The sting of death is sin." That is, death is an object of terror, and a source of misery, from no consideration except sin. The reason why we fear to undergo the change implied in death, is an apprehension, that it will leave us in a state of misery. This apprehension cannot predominate in the mind of him, who is justified by Christ, for he is assured as Paul was, that "to die is gain," and "to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." The apostle farther illustrates the meaning of the text, and says, "The strength of sin is the law." That is, the law points out the nature and consequences of sin, ascertains its desert, and denounces punishment. To the Romans Paul says, "I had not known sin but by the law." "Without the law sin was dead." "I was alive without the law." That is, while he was without a knowledge of the real nature of the law, and the punishment it threatened sin, he entertained hopes of salvation by the law; "but," says he, "when the commandment came" in its true import and force, "sin revived," it started up like a tyrant holding him in bondage; "and I died." That is, he gave up all hope of obtaining salvation by his own obedience to the law, and felt himself "shut up" under condemnation. How was he then to be delivered and justified? By the righteousness of Christ. For he declares thus of Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." He then who believes in Christ, trusts to his righteousness for salvation, is pardoned, acquitted from condemnation, and of course, can with propriety triumph over sin and death, exclaiming with the apostle, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Thirdly,* Another reason of the christian's triumph over sin and death, is the evidence he has, that his salvation is wholly by the grace of God.

From what has been advanced under the preceding articles, it appears, that he who is brought to believe on Christ, is convinced of the justice of his condemnation by the law, and de-



prived of all hope of obtaining salvation by it. Hence he knows and realizes that he is saved by grace. Grace is an exercise of favor. It implies that the person to whom it is manifested, is treated better than he has a right to demand. It means the bestowing of good where evil is deserved, and may be justly inflicted. Deliverance, therefore, from the sentence of the law and salvation from sin, are the unmerited gifts of God. This reasoning abundantly corresponds with the language of scripture.—Says Paul, “if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise of none effect.” “It is of faith, that it might be by grace, and if by grace then it no more of works, otherwise, grace is no more grace.” “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God.” In the gospel plan of salvation, there is no such thing, as the blending of works and grace. Their nature, and their provinces are wholly distinct. “To him, says Paul, that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt ; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Believers can say in the language of truth, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Thus the christian, convinced from his own experience and the scriptures, that his salvation is by grace, has no confidence in himself ; but places it all in God. Here is all his hope, and all his rejoicing. For he knows that God is faithful, by whom he was called to the fellowship of his son. If his salvation were left to his own wavering resolutions, and feeble efforts, he might well despair ; he might well expect never to be free from the sting of death and the strength of sin ; but as he knows, that he is kept by the power of God, he can with confidence consider himself as more than conqueror.

*Fourthly,* Another reason of the christian’s triumph is, the evidence he has of the resurrection of Christ.

Our assent to the truth of this, is to be governed, though not exclusively, by the testimony of those who were eye witnesses.

The fact, therefore, of Christ's resurrection, claims belief on the same ground as other historical facts. What then do we require in order to the belief of these? That there should be a sufficient number of witnesses, men of veracity not governed by interested motives. In these respects, the accounts given by the evangelists and apostles carry irresistible conviction. Their conduct in asserting the resurrection of Christ, is utterly unaccountable on any supposition, except that of a firm belief, founded on the resistless evidence of their senses. Like plain honest men, they simply declared the fact. They persisted in declaring it. From what motives did they act? Did they seek for ease, or fame, or wealth, or honor? No; in asserting the resurrection of Christ, they sacrificed every thing usually esteemed among men. They exposed themselves to reproach and persecution, to poverty and distress. Would they have done these things, if they had not possessed sufficient evidence that Christ had risen from the dead? The immediate disciples of Christ did not seem to understand him, when he repeatedly assured them, that he should die, and that he should rise again on the third day. When he was crucified they seemed to have despaired of the cause in which they had embarked. Could any thing but the clearest evidence dispel their doubts, and revive their confidence? When they saw their master hanging on the cross, suffering death, the greatest of all human calamities, could any trivial motive, could any probable testimony, induce them to engage again in his cause, and expose themselves to the vengeance of his murderers? Reason says, no; common sense and common experience say, no. What evidence then had the disciples which convinced them, dispelled their doubts, and recalled their hopes? I answer, the evidence of their senses. "To them, Christ after his passion, showed himself alive by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The apostle Paul had been a great enemy to Christ and to his followers. He persecuted them even unto strange cities. Yet violent and obstinate as he was, he was finally convinced of his error, and became a zealous supporter of the resurrection of Christ. He supposed this doctrine to be a fiction; a doctrine injurious to

himself and his nation. We may therefore be assured that he did not embrace it without the most impressive evidence. This evidence he states thus—"For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins; that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day; and that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve; after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; after that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also." This account was written by Paul, but a few years after the resurrection. He had all the means necessary to produce full conviction, and he received with joy the doctrine he had labored to exterminate.

The evidences of the resurrection have been transmitted to us through the testimony of relators, and are as direct and full as the evidences of any fact recorded in history. I am persuaded that no man who sufficiently and candidly examines these evidences, can withhold his belief of the resurrection of Christ. If he can, he can disbelieve all history without exception. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of Christianity. "If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins." "But now is Christ risen." Of course the christian is assured that he shall be like him; that he shall be fashioned like to Christ's glorious body; and that with him, he shall live, and reign, and triumph forever.

*Fifthly*, Another reason of the christian's triumph over sin and death, is, the evidence he has, that all mankind shall be raised up from the dead.

For the knowledge of the resurrection of the body, we are wholly indebted to divine revelation. Our faith in this doctrine rests exclusively on the testimony of God. It is not analogous to any known laws of nature, that animal bodies once dead, should be reorganized and reanimated. These effects, however, can be produced by omnipotence, and require no greater power and wisdom than were exerted to form the first living body. The resurrection of the body is abundantly asserted in the scriptures, particularly in those of the New Testament. Christ said,



“The hour is coming when all that are in their graves, shall come forth.” The apostle Paul says thus, “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” The first fruits were a pledge and assurance of the subsequent harvest. In like manner Christ’s resurrection is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead. “For, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” The doctrine of the resurrection, constituted a chief part of the primitive apostolic preaching. In the fourth chapter of the Acts, it is said of Peter and John, that the priests and captains of the temple were grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead. In the eighteenth chapter Paul declares to king Agrippa that the Jews had accused him on account of his hope of the resurrection of the dead, and says, “why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” To the Athenians the same Apostle preached “Jesus and the resurrection.” To the Corinthians he said, “God hath both raised up the Lord, and will raise us up by his power.”—There appear to be two resurrections spoken of in the scriptures. The first is described by Paul, thus, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” John the revelator describes the same, thus, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—The second and general resurrection is described thus by Christ. “The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of

damnation." John says, "I saw the dead small and great stand before God: and the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them." Thus it appears from the scriptures that all mankind will be raised from the dead. The resurrection of those who believe in Christ, is taught more fully in the scriptures, than the resurrection of the wicked. The reason of this doubtless was, that believers, particularly in the primitive ages of the Church, might be encouraged to persevere. Paul says to the Romans, "if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you." To the Philippians he says of Christ, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body." To the Corinthians he says, "As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The christian, then, has great reason to triumph over sin and death; for he has a well grounded hope that his body will be raised up from death freed from sin, rendered glorious, spiritual, incorruptible, and capable of endless felicity in heaven.

*Sixthly*, Another reason of the christian's triumph is, the evidence he has, that after the resurrection, he shall be admitted to complete eternal happiness in heaven.

It is evident from the scriptures, that believers immediately after death, enter into happiness. Paul said thus, "for me to die, is gain,—I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." The voice from heaven said to John, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;" that is, their blessedness will commence as soon as they die. The state which intervenes between death and the final judgment, is in the scriptures, termed Hades. Into this state both the righteous and the wicked enter, though it is not the final state of happiness for the former nor of punishment for the latter. It was into this state that the soul of Christ entered after his crucifixion. The Apostle Peter applies the words of

the Psalmist to him, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," or hades. Christ by descending into this region established his power in it. For says Paul, "For this cause Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and living." Hence it follows that death does not destroy, nor even interrupt the kingdom of Christ. This kingdom reaches forward and is continued into the invisible state, and through that to final happiness in heaven. Christ said thus, "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell or hades shall not prevail against it." What are we to understand by the gates of hades? Undoubtedly they mean death, because death lets us into the invisible world, the receptacle of departed souls. By the gates of hades not prevailing against the church; we are to understand that death neither destroys the soul, nor suspends its power and enjoyments; but only separates it from the body and introduces it into that world which will continue till the resurrection. Whatever was terrible in that state, has been removed by Christ. He has rendered the path luminous to all his followers. Believers will doubtless enjoy great happiness in this state; but when their bodies shall be raised incorruptible, and be united to their souls, their happiness will exceed all conception. It will be "a crown of life, and an eternal weight of glory." Just so sure as Christ has died, and entered the invisible state; just so sure we must die and enter that state; just so sure as he has risen, just so sure we shall rise; just so sure as he now reigns in glory, just so sure we shall reign with him, for we shall "see him as he is, and shall be like him." All real christians who die in faith will be brought forth from hades to the resurrection of life. Christ who is their king and their judge, will say unto them, "come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." They will then take possession of that inheritance which has been reserved in heaven for them, "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."—Thus by the light of scripture we can trace the progress of those who embrace the gospel, not only through this world, but through death, through the invisible intervening world, and to the state of eternal glory in heaven. When they



arrive at that mansion, beyond the reach of sin, and sorrow, and pain, and death, and hell ; with what ecstasy will they adore that power, and wisdom, and goodness, which brought them out of all their tribulations, to a kingdom of pure delight ; where sun and moon and stars shall fade ; and the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and their God and their glory !

Having brought into view the reasons of the christian's triumph over sin and death, I shall now close the subject by making one general remark, and giving it a brief illustration. The remark I would make is this—That the doctrines advanced in the preceding discourse, are peculiar and distinguishing to revelation ; and that they are admirably adapted to man as a fallen, sinful being. Under the three first particulars, it was shown that the christian has reason to triumph over sin and death, from the evidence he has, that the reigning power of sin over his heart is destroyed ; that he is justified and acquitted from condemnation, by the righteousness of Christ ; and that his salvation is wholly from the grace of God. The writings of the ancient philosophers, though professedly designed for the reformation and happiness of man, contain no such doctrines as these. *These* are above all human wisdom. They apply to the heart, which is the seat of all man's wickedness. They are calculated to make the tree good, that the fruit also may be good. That religion can be of no real use to man, which does not inspire his heart with good principles. The first thing that real religion implies, is a renovation of the moral temper. If it did not proceed farther, it would leave man in despair, as to final happiness ; for he would feel himself a sinner, and liable to suffer the penalty of the divine law. The scriptures in the next place present the righteousness of Christ, by which the sinner is justified, accepted and pardoned. His fears are now allayed ; and he has a hope, like “an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.” He boasts no righteousness of his own, and is convinced that his deliverance has proceeded wholly from the free grace of God. This doctrine is calculated to humble his pride, and make him place all his dependence on God. Such is the excellency of the christian doctrine.

Under the three last particulars of the preceding discourse it

was shown, that the christian had reason to triumph over sin and death, from the evidence he has, that Christ has risen from the dead ; that all mankind will be raised, and that he shall finally be received into eternal happiness in heaven. These doctrines, like those just mentioned, are peculiar to revelation. Though they lie more out of the reach of common experience, because they are founded wholly on testimony ; yet they are not less true, nor less firmly believed by the christian. It is sufficient for him, that they are contained in a system of doctrines exhibiting the most prominent features of a divine original. He assents to the resurrection of Christ, because he thinks it attested by a sufficient number of adequate witnesses ; he assents to the resurrection of the body, because it is abundantly asserted in the testimony of God. For the same reason, he assents to the final happiness of the believer. It is not essential to a christian, that he should be able to comprehend the manner in which theological truths consist ; nor the manner in which prophecied events and facts will take place. To all those things contained in the scriptures, beyond human comprehension, the christian assents solely on the testimony of God. This assent is denominated faith, and its full extent implies a surrender of the heart and intellect to God. And hence it is that so much importance is attached to faith, and that it is ranked first in the catalogue of all moral and divine virtues. The exercise of faith, is perfectly reasonable and consistent. For man in his present dark, imperfect state of existence, cannot comprehend all the truths which it is essential to his happiness to admit and practise. Hence Paul says, " Faith is the substance of things hoped for." It attaches on things invisible ; it realizes their existence, so that they exert a governing influence on the heart and become principles of action. Hence the apostle says ; " We walk by faith, not by sight." From what strong and exalted motives must he act, who firmly believes, that he shall be raised from the dead ; and that if he endures to the end in virtue, he shall be saved ? The preceding doctrines are calculated to alleviate the sufferings, sorrows, and calamities of the present life. Receiving, experiencing and believing the truth, we shall be persuaded that " if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have

a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Of what vast importance then, is it, that we embrace the doctrines contained in the pages of inspiration? Here only, shall we find an unerring directory to the kingdom of eternal glory. Here only, are exhibited motives the most powerful to excite us to virtue, and to deter us from sin. Are there any here, whose views of happiness are limited to the present transitory scene? What will become of those pleasures, you so eagerly pursue? Of those honors in which you exult? Of those riches you amass? Of those splendors in which you shine? Can these support you on the couch of disease, or in the hour of dissolution? Alas! all, all will vanish. They will leave you in sorrow and in death. How much better to embrace the gospel! to be governed in time by motives drawn from eternity! You will then find a Saviour, whose presence will be the strength of your heart; whose love will disarm the king of terrors; whose glory will shine through the gloomy valley. His almighty arm will support you in your departure from time, and his hand will place on your head a crown of eternal life.



A

FUNERAL SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

THE REV. JAMES MANNING, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE.

DELIVERED IN THE BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE,

IN PROVIDENCE,

JULY 31, 1791.



## PREFACE.

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CONCERNING the death with which Adam was threatened, theologians have entertained various and opposite opinions. These, so far as I can recollect from the course of my reading, may be comprehended in the following summary.

The first maintains, that the threatened death, implied, temporal (or natural,) spiritual and eternal death.

The second, that it implied natural death only.

The third, that it implied spiritual death only.

The fourth, that it implied annihilation.

The second of these opinions has, on the whole, appeared to me the most rational and consistent. I am not, however, disposed to be so rigidly tenacious of my own sentiments, as to imagine I may not be in an error. All men have full liberty of opinion, and ought to enjoy it without subjecting themselves to the imputation of heresy. For my own part, I can safely say, that I have never been disposed to confine myself to the peculiar tenets of any sect of religionists whatever. Great and good men have appeared among all denominations of christians, and I see not why all do not deserve an equal share of attention and regard. My object has been to examine with candor the sentiments of all, and to receive whatever appeared to be consistent with truth.

In that part of the following Sermon to which objections have



been made, my sole design was to investigate the scripture doctrine of the origin and destruction of natural death. As my own conviction obliged me to dissent from most of my brethren on the subject, I was unfortunate enough to incur no small degree of displeasure, and to subject myself to the suspicion of adopting opinions which never held a residence in my heart, and of discarding others which I fully believed. Many consequences were drawn, which by no means followed from the arguments advanced in the Sermon. I know not by what kind of argumentation it can be proved, that he who believes God annexed natural death only, to the breach of a positive command must be supposed to believe, that sin deserves no other punishment, or that man is not in a state of total depravity, and that he is not wholly dependent on the favor of God for salvation. Every moral being, as soon as he begins to exist in a state of consciousness and intelligence, is bound by moral law, and cannot deviate from it without involving himself in guilt and spiritual death. This death, which is alienation of affection from God, exposes the subject of it not only to everlasting ruin by a necessary consequence, but to whatever positive punishments the good of the universe may render it proper to inflict. Spiritual death was introduced by violation of the moral law written in the heart of Adam, and took place before he had eaten the forbidden fruit. The moment he consented to violate a positive command, he exposed himself to the true, proper and necessary punishment of sin. Mortality did not, like spiritual death, necessarily result from the violation of a moral law, nor from any previous fitness and connexion of things, but from the arbitrary though wise appointment of Jehovah. The angels who sinned, were not subjected to mortality. Let us suppose that the threatening of natural death had been previously denounced, as their punishment for violating a positive law, would it not be reasonable to infer that, that threatening included all their present misery and spiritual death? The term death appears to me to have but one original plain meaning, "the loss of life." In various parts of the scriptures, it is used by a figure of speech in a sense different from what is proper to it. It is sometimes used to point out the state of men wholly under the dominion

of sin, and sometimes, the misery to be endured as the punishment of sin. But is it right to infer, that a word when used in a sense different from that which is proper to it, comprehends not only its proper meaning, but one or two figurative meanings? Proceeding in this way, we violate the laws of propriety, and leave no standard by which we can ascertain the meaning intended by the author.

Some have supposed that I viewed the Atonement as of little consequence, because I considered Christ's sufferings no farther than they respected natural death. To this I would reply, that the subject I was discussing required me to show the manner in which Christ had abolished death, and not the manner in which he had rendered the pardon of sin consistent.

These observations are suggested with no other view than to make it appear, that nothing in the following Discourse is so inconsistent with orthodox divinity as some have supposed. I may be in an error. If I be, possibly, I may not be destitute of companions, even from among those, who determine never to deviate from opinions they have once adopted.

The only thing really essential to christian union is love, or benevolent affection. It is therefore, with me a fixed principle to censure no man, except for immorality. A diversity of religious opinions, in a state so imperfect, obscure and sinful as the present, is to be expected. An entire coincidence in sentiment, even in important doctrines, is by no means essential to christian society, or the attainment of eternal felicity. How many are there who appear to have been subjects of regeneration, who have scarcely an entire, comprehensive view of one doctrine in the Bible? Will the gates of Paradise be barred against these, because they did not possess the penetrating sagacity of an Edwards, or Hopkins? Or shall these great theological champions engross heaven, and shout hallelujahs from its walls, while a Priestly, a Price, and a Winchester, merely for difference in opinion, though pre-eminent in virtue, must sink into the regions of darkness and pain? I cannot induce myself to repose so small a share of confidence in the mercy of God, as to imagine, he will not pardon all the sincere errors of his creatures. All men are capable of the same moral temper, but not

of the same intellectual views, enjoyments, and acquisitions. Deity, benevolent in all his designs, and glorious in all his works, has exhibited a variety in the capacities of men, not less beautiful, not less harmonious and useful than that which he has exhibited in the productions of nature. Perfect union in opinion and belief will not take place, till all men possess, not only the same kind of temper, but the same degree of capacity. Candor and forbearance ought always to mark the character of christians. Nothing derogates more from their true dignity than to censure or neglect others for difference of sentiment, especially when they consider, that "the ways of God are past finding out" to perfection.

J. M.

*R. I. College, June 23, 1796.*



## A FUNERAL SERMON.

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THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROYED, IS DEATH.—1 Cor. xv. 26.

THAT period which terminates human life is truly solemn and important. Solemn, because it crumbles us to dust; important, because it determines our fate for eternity. Death divests us of all our splendor, and robs us of all our enjoyments. A near view of the gloomy vale in which he reigns, freezes our spirits, and startles us with horror. We look at the pale vault of skulls, and weep for the fate of man. We behold his awful enemy, the king of terrors, reigning over him with silent but expressive triumph. The circumstances with which death is attended, are peculiarly shocking to humanity. The ghastly countenance, the convulsive struggle, the expiring groan, the total inactivity, the opening grave, the descending coffin; these damp our spirits, check our presumption; they solemnize our cheerful passions; they arrest our attention; they place eternity before us; they plant our paths with terror, and invest us with a melancholy gloom. Death, the best men contemplate with an awful solemnity of soul. Said David, “my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart.” Psal. lxxiii, 2—6. Said a king of Judah, “in the cutting off my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave. I am deprived of the residue of my years. I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the earth.” Is. xxxviii, 10, 11. To us, indeed, death is clothed in terror. We consider him as our enemy,

whether we contemplate him as separating soul and body by painful agonies, as tearing us from the world, or entering us on the undiscovered regions of eternity. Such is our condition in the present state of existence, such are our connexions and dependencies, so imperfect is our knowledge of futurity, so inadequate are our conceptions of the great plan of divine administration, that even if death were in reality our greatest friend, yet we cannot avoid considering him as our greatest enemy. At the very sound of death, nature startles with alarm. The authority of reason, and the fortitude of philosophy, are lost in our innate fears of dissolution. Our timorousness adds to our misery; it throws a gloom over our expiring moments, and sharpens the sting of death.

We stand on "the isthmus of a middle state." If we look back, we behold nothing but the black gulf of non-existence; if we look forward, we see the interminable ocean of eternity. The waves are constantly rolling against us and threatening to overwhelm us. The foundation trembles beneath our feet. To go back, we shudder; to go forward, we fear and tremble. We therefore cling to our present possession; we maintain the contest as long as possible. Man has in this world no permanent residence. Enemies on all sides arm themselves against him, to drive him into eternity. Poverty and want surround him; misfortune stretches over him her iron hand; sorrows and grief oppress him; disease and infirmity attack him. But exposed as man is, forlorn and wretched in himself and in his condition, yet to fill up the cup of his woe, he must struggle with death! liable every moment to be rushed into eternity! death thou considerest as thine enemy; well, let him be thine enemy. Submit. But cease to weep, for victory is thine.

We see man rise into life; we watch his progress through it. We behold him smiling in the bloom and sprightliness of youth, exulting in the splendor and vigor of manhood, crowned with the wisdom and clothed with the dignity of age. We mark his decline; we follow him to the tomb; but unassisted by revelation, we can follow him no farther. Nature here leaves us enveloped in midnight darkness. An awful shade hangs over the region of death. The man is bound and confined in the

prison of his enemy. We may weep for his fate, but we cannot assist him ; we cannot release him. Human ability can find no way for his deliverance. But shall he never be delivered? Alas! Shall we forever weep over his ruins? Shall the great enemy forever hold the man under his pale dominion? Whither shall we fly for assistance? Shall we find no consolation?—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory." But how does he give it? "Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light." Though death establish an universal empire on the ruins of humanity, yet that empire shall be subverted; though he bind man in prison, yet Christ opens "the prison doors to those that are bound;" though he be our enemy, our most formidable enemy, yet he is our last enemy, and shall be destroyed; for thus saith the text, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

I. In what respects does death appear to be our enemy?

II. How shall he be destroyed?

III. What the consequences of his destruction?

I. In what respects does death appear to be our enemy? He appears our enemy, because he effects the disunion of soul and body. Between them the established connexion is mutually strong and delightful. Hence Paul says, "no man ever hated his own body." Eph. v. 29. He loves to procure it nourishment, to afford it the proper means of exercise, and to indulge it in tranquility. A flood of health, while it invigorates the body, enlivens and accelerates the mind. Sickness, while it emaciates the former, depresses the latter. The disorders of the mind have no less effect on the body. Mutual sympathy takes place between them. They are intimate companions. They alleviate their sorrows and heighten their joys, by reciprocal participation. Though the soul possesses powers which evince her capacity of separate subsistence, and mark her destination for immortality; yet, as she is in the embryo of her existence, as she knows not what awful scenes of glory or terror may lie before her; she is reluctant to have her present con-



nexion with the body dissolved. Notwithstanding the authoritative voice of revelation, the soul, surrounded with native fears, feels uncertain whether she shall depart to lodge in a prison of misery, to exult in a mansion of joy, or to roam unguided through the vast amplitude of the universe. As the soul, involved in uncertainty with respect to futurity, is unwilling to quit her present station ; as she is in so great a degree delighted in her present union with the body, as to prefer it to a dislodgement into eternity ; death, which dissolves that union, is viewed as the enemy of man. Death frightens us with terror, and wrings us with agony. Nature herself teaches us to consider that which produces pain and misery, as our enemy. Could we in the twinkling of an eye be snatched into incorruptibility, without the struggles of dissolution, death could not reach us with his sting ; he could not be viewed as our enemy, because he could have no power, and consequently could not bow us to his dominion. But while we are clothed with mortality, we must be exposed to his attacks. Sin has divested us of our armor, and exposed us to our enemy. The soul when attacked yields with reluctance. She maintains the contest with the king of terrors, when he surrounds her with all his army of disease and pain. At length, disabled by repeated assaults, she quits her garrison, and reverts to her great original. The body is now subjected, and left to devouring death. The great enemy is now victorious. He reigns, he triumphs over man ;—man, once Lord of creation, now the prisoner of death. He stiffens the mortal, and buries him in the dust. There he crumbles his sinews, there he moulders his bones, and riots on his marrow. Thus death, as he tears asunder soul and body by painful struggles, and reduces the latter to the dust, is viewed as the enemy of man.

2. Death appears to be an enemy, because he cuts the tenderest ties of nature and friendship. Our connexions, both domestic and social, are sources of the highest temporal happiness. Without them, existence would scarcely be desirable. But does not death dissolve them all ? Miserable indeed must be that man who is deprived of friends, secluded society, and doomed to perpetual solitude. Imagine to yourselves some unhappy mor-

tal bereft of all connexions in society. Dejected with melancholly, alone, he wanders amidst the rough scenes of nature in the solitary wild, where scarce the savage foot has trod. He stops. He leans on the rock, where the stream gushes its murmurs from the caverned mountains. He thinks of his friends, his once-loved friends, cut down by death; all hurried from the world; he only left disconsolate, to bear their name, and mourn their fate. The recollection breaks his heart. The tear drops, —“O death, my greatest enemy! why to me so cruel! O wing a dart, and snatch me from the world. Give me to my friends.”

This enemy calls us to the greatest sacrifices. He rushes into our families; tears away our parents, brothers, sisters, children. He throws a dismal veil over all the objects of our delight. Our hearts swell with softest grief, our eyes float in feeling tears. The voice of woe sighs through our mansions. The last enemy is an universal enemy. Wide is the field of his ravages; promiscuous and dreadful his carnage. With a merciless hand he crumbles all in ruin, from the blooming babe to the man of snowy locks. With an impartial hand, he lays in dust the haughty master and the cringing slave, the empurpled monarch and the tattered beggar. He unnerves the arm of strength, and withers the bloom of beauty. He destroys the most specious titles, the most delicious life, and the most dazzling grandeur. Mortal man! look at thine enemy; thy coffin, thy grave; thyself, a ghastly sheeted corpse; cast thine eye on the dominions of death! What seest thou? Does not thy blood freeze? Does not thy hair rise, and stiffen on thy head? Dark, lonely, silent, is the house of death. There the memory of past joys can never come; no mirth there cheers the gloomy mansion. Ghastly and frightful the pale inhabitants. Here are the victories, here the spoils, here the trophies of our enemy. Man may rise high in honor, he may be surrounded with the guards, and invested with the pomp of royalty; his elevation may secure the submission, and excite the admiration, of his fellow mortals; but, when death arrives, all these circumstances serve only to render his victory more complete, and the ruin more extensive. Though the monarch, in the days of his prosperity, may defy the powers of earth; yet, when the king of terror comes, his heart will fail,

his throne will totter, his crown will slide from his brow, and his sceptre will drop from his hand.

3. Death appears our enemy, because he strips us of all our enjoyments. Riches, honors, pleasures; these must be reduced to the shroud in which we must soon be buried. If we are delighted with breathing the air, and beholding the light of heaven; if we are delighted with the bounties of God's providence; if we are charmed with the grandeur and beauty of creation; death must be considered as our enemy. He presses the lungs, that they cannot rise; he withers the eye, that it cannot see; he dulls the ear, that it cannot hear; and stiffens the senses, that we cannot feel.

4. He is our enemy, because he is arrayed in terror. "The sting of death," says Paul, "is sin." 'Tis this that gives him all his power; 'tis this that exposes us to his attacks. A sense of sin loads the mind with guilt, and penetrates it with a fearful sense of judgment. The most natural idea that occurs, in a near view of death is, that the soul immediately after its disunion with the body, must appear before the great Judge of the universe. She shudders at the thought; but death hurries her away prepared or unprepared. Tears, and groans, and sighs may plead, but all in vain. No stop, no delay, no discharge. Go we must, lodge we must in the house of death. This enemy is truly terrible. When he separates soul and body, agony and pain are his attendants. When he brings us to the bourne of life, and the soul with an exploring eye looks all around for assistance, he saddens us with grief, by bringing to view the objects of delight, which we must now leave forever. We look back with regret, we look forward with amazement. Death encircles us with terror. Creation fades on the sight; the awful veil, thrown over futurity, begins to draw back. Our spirits shrink. Death pities us not. He hurries us forward. Alas! how melancholy the thought, that we must be forced by this enemy from all the scenes of life, to dwell with the sheeted dead! The places which now know us, will soon know us no more forever. To us the sun will soon cease to rise; to us the seasons will cease to return with their grateful vicissitudes.

5. Death appears our enemy, if we consider him as the off-



spring of sin. Paul says, that "by sin, death entered into the world, and passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This enemy has reigned over the whole family of man. He has used all the elements of nature to pour the punishment of our sin on man. Many a mortal has he lodged in the bed of the great deep; many has he consumed with flames; millions has he crushed in the jaws of earthquakes: millions has he destroyed by the violence of tempests. This enemy lurks all around us, in the earth, in air, in sea, in fire, in our food; nay, in ourselves. Thus death appears to be our enemy, whether we consider him as destroying the body, taking away our relations, stripping us of all our enjoyments arming himself with terrors, and punishing us for our sins with disease and all the elements of nature. Numerous indeed are the enemies we have to encounter, sickness, pain, disappointment, poverty and want; but the greatest enemy which none can withstand, is death. And yet, formidable as he is, complete as his victory appears, we have the joyful, solemn news to declare, "this enemy shall be destroyed." The text styles him the last enemy. Yet we shall obtain the victory. The devil was man's first enemy, and death is his last. Both shall be destroyed. Christ "hath abolished death;" he was manifest in the flesh, "that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil." Christ has struck the blow which will complete the victory, in the destruction of death.

## II. But how shall death be destroyed?

That we may answer this question with perspicuity, it is necessary to ascertain what is implied in the word death, as used in our text. Paul, while treating of the resurrection, that he might with the greater plainness shew how it should be effected, informs us how man became subject to mortality. He institutes a comparison between Adam and Christ; opposes the death introduced by the first, to the life restored by the last. "By man," says he, "came death; by man came also the resurrection of the dead." That is, as Adam subjected man to death, so Christ restored him to life. "For as in Adam all die, even

so in Christ shall all be made alive." In these passages, Paul speaks simply of the resuscitation of the body. It is fully evident, that as to restoration from death, all men gain in Christ what they lost in Adam; because the argumentation, in the verses preceding our text, evinces that Christ abolished that death which Adam incurred. Let us examine. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" "or dying, thou shalt die;" or, as some of the Hebrews translate it, "you shall then begin to be mortal." This sentence has been explained by many as including not only natural, but what divines term spiritual death. This death, we are told, consists in "separation from God;" an entire inability to perform holy exercises, an entire destitution of holiness. It consists in sin, in opposition of heart to God. That all mankind are in such a state of insensibility to divine things, that they may be said to be dead in sin, to have a spiritual death, we readily acknowledge. But that spiritual death was threatened as the punishment of eating the forbidden fruit, is not evident, either from scripture or reason. We readily grant, that spiritual death came on man as the unavoidable consequence of violating a moral law, but not as the threatened punishment of the first transgression.

1. Such is the nature of God, that his predictions must have their accomplishment. In him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He will not therefore threaten a punishment, to be inflicted in certain circumstances, and not inflict that punishment when the specified circumstances concur; neither will he threaten one punishment, and instead of that inflict another. To Adam God said, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam ate; Adam died. The same death which God threatened, he inflicted. "Dust thou art," said God, "and unto dust shalt thou return." This is a plain explanation of the death denounced, as the punishment of transgression. The Justice of God immediately trod upon the heels of the transgressor.

2. The nature and state of Adam were such, that it is by no means probable, that spiritual death was threatened him as the punishment of his disobedience. "Let the earth," said God, "bring forth the living creature." Gen. i. 24. "God formed

man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul." Gen. ii. 7. The word translated creature in the first and soul in the last, of these passages, is the same in the original. Man became a living creature; the punishment of his transgression was, then, that he should become a dead creature. Adam did become a dead creature; for the scripture says, that he lived "nine hundred and thirty-nine years, and he died." We are not informed that he died any other death, either before or after the breath of the Lord left his body. As he was created in the image of his Maker, he was happy in his existence. His paths were strewed with flowers. He rejoiced in the beauties of creation, and exulted in the smiles of his God. It does not appear that he knew any distinction between soul and body, natural life and spiritual life. He knew simply that he was a being, a living being. Thus said Paul, "the first man Adam was made a living soul, or creature. He was just waked from the dust; he knew that he had existence; he knew that he was happy in that existence. If he did not know these things, the wisdom of God would be greatly impeached in denouncing death as the punishment of transgression. The prospect, therefore, of losing existence would be a powerful incitement to obedience. The first Adam, the first living soul or creature was natural. So says Paul, "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." "The first man," or living soul, "was of the earth," and the sentence passed upon him was that he should revert to the earth.

3. A threatening against Adam implying spiritual death, would have contravened the ends to be attained by the infliction of punishment. These are either the reformation of the transgressor, the determent of others from the commission of crimes, or the satisfaction of justice. Spiritual death would be so far from reforming, that it would render the transgressor more disobedient; because the death consists in the influence of sin on the heart. Such a punishment, instead of satisfying, would increase the demands of justice; because as it would render the transgressor more sinful, it would render him more guilty. Such a punishment could not deter others from the commission of



crimes, because there were no others. If, then, neither of the ends of punishment could be attained by the infliction of spiritual death ; most surely a God of infinite wisdom never would have threatened that death as a punishment.

4. The implication of spiritual death in the threatening, would have rendered the punishment perfectly agreeable to Adam, after his transgression.\* A sinner chooses to be a sinner. He delights in alienation of heart from God, and "will not come to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Had God threatened spiritual death, the sense of his threatening would have been thus : "If you sin, you shall be a sinner." This appears to make the unavoidable consequence, the arbitrary punishment of sin.

5. Had spiritual death been implied in the punishment denounced against Adam, man's salvation, on the present constitution of redemption, could not have been effected. Man, by suffering spiritual death, could not satisfy divine justice, because the more he experienced that death, the more sinful would be his heart. 'Tis evident, that God must inflict the same punishment he threatens. Let Christ take the place of man ; let him be "made flesh ;" let him "bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows ;" let him "bear our sins in his own body on the tree ;" let him be "made a curse for us ;" let him "die, the just for the unjust." If Christ has undertaken to liberate man, it is evident he cannot do it, unless he satisfies God's justice, by suffering the threatened punishment. From the nature of spiritual death, it is clear that Christ could not suffer it. That death consists in

\* The learned and judicious Dr. WEST, of Stockbridge, with great propriety observes, "That spiritual death, as the phrase is commonly used, means a person's being perfectly under the dominion and power of sin ; or to express it in scripture language, being "dead in trespasses and sins ;" which is the same as being wholly and totally a sinner. But this surely can with no propriety be considered as a curse upon the sinner. Sin is voluntary ; it is what is chosen by the sinner, and is not the curse itself, but that which exposes to it and incurs it. It would be strange, that for committing one sin, which must be a voluntary act, God should threaten the sinner with committing another, which must be equally voluntary ; and make this the penalty of the former, the curse to be endured for it. At this rate, the penalties of the law could not possibly be any terror to the sinner." *SCRIP. DOC. OF ATONEMENT*, p. 95-

the influence of sin on the heart, in opposition to God. But Christ "knew no sin," he was so "holy, harmless, undefiled." He was not opposed to God, for he became "obedient unto death." Unto what death? Not unto spiritual death, for that would have rendered him disobedient; "but unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 8. It appears, then, that Christ did not suffer spiritual death, and yet he has redeemed man; for he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 6. The passion of spiritual death, as it would have opposed Christ to the divine character and government; so it would have created in him an entire disqualification for the procurement of redemption.

6. The limitation of the punishment denounced against Adam to natural death, scatters light through the scriptures, and unfolds the doctrine of future rewards and punishments in a beautiful consistency with the resurrection of all men by Christ. The scriptures are full of this important idea, that Christ died for all men, and that by virtue of his resurrection all shall be raised to life. "We thus judge," says Paul, "that if one died for all, then were all dead." 2 Cor. v. 14. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 21. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. Consider these texts as referring wholly to the death and resurrection of mankind, the truth of the gospel then appears clear; the apostle's argumentation is disembarrassed and determinate. What if the free gift has come upon all men, upon every one of the human race, unto justification of life? Who objects? "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died: yea, rather, that is risen again." God can now, consistently with his justice, free the prisoners of death. To effect this, he declared to be his determination. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction." Hos. xiii. 14. Christ abolished the same death that was introduced by Adam. But the death introduced by Adam was natural. For, says Paul, opposing the resuscitation of the body, to the death which en-

tered by original sin, "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. xv. 21. Every one of the human race will be rescued from the dominion of the death denounced against Adam. Thus, says Christ, "the hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth." For what? for very different purposes. "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29.

But if spiritual death was denounced and inflicted as a punishment; if Christ has abolished that death; then none of the human race can come forth unto the resurrection of condemnation; but all will be restored, not only to immortal existence, but to immortal happiness; because every creature, as soon as spiritual death is abolished, is brought into the liberty of the gospel. He that was dead in trespasses and sins is now quickened and created anew in Christ Jesus. But as Christ did not suffer spiritual death, God abolishes that death where he pleases, without interfering with his justice; because that death came as a consequence, and not as the threatened punishment of sin. All therefore who are freed from natural and spiritual death, will in a future state be happy; those freed from natural death only will be miserable, because under the influence of sin, and in a state of opposition to God. They cannot impeach God as the author of their misery; because this they endure not as a positive punishment, but as the unavoidable consequence of their sin. God is now glorified; because he has freed all his creatures from every punishment which he threatened against them in Adam. The finally impenitent, as he will suffer from his own voluntary wickedness, will forever remain inexcusable, and experience the mortifying effects of self-condemnation.

From all these considerations we are induced to draw this conclusion, that natural death only was included in the punishment denounced against Adam.\* From Paul's argumentation,

\* 1 Cor. xv. 22. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." These words made it evident that those made alive by Christ are as numerous as those subjected to death by Adam. Language cannot express this idea with more certainty. Those therefore who believe that the death



in the verses preceding our text, it is evident that Christ abolished the same death that Adam incurred. That death is styled the "last enemy." We are now prepared to show how this last enemy is destroyed. It is by the appearance, death and resurrection, of the Son of God in our nature, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light." 2 Tim. i. 10. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." For what? "that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death." Heb. ii. 14. Human nature was guilty. How shall it be made innocent? It was condemned. How shall it be justified? It was subjected to the dominion of death. How shall it be emancipated? That nature, by sin, was incapacitated to satisfy the demands of the law, under whose sentence it was held. Which way shall we look for salvation? What can be done? How shall man be delivered, and God be just? The scripture points out the way through Jesus Christ. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John i. 14. But why was the word made flesh? Why did he assume our nature? That by obedience in that nature he might free it from death. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." Heb. ii. 16. Had Christ taken upon him the nature of angels, he might have been the Saviour of angels, but not of men. Human nature was under the sentence of condemnation. Satisfaction therefore must be made in that nature to divine justice. The threatening of God must be suffered; the precepts of his law must be obeyed; or the sentence of death against man could not be reversed. In Christ we behold human nature qualified to obey and to suffer; to obey because rendered innocent; to suffer, because united with divinity. We behold Christ entering the world in that nature, obeying in that nature, dying in that nature, rising in that nature, justified, sanctified, glorified; triumphing over principalities, "leading captivity captive," ascending on high, and sitting down forever at "the right hand of the Father." The introduction of Adam, was temporal, spiritual, and eternal, if they would be consistent, ought to believe in universal salvation. For Christ has abolished from all, the death produced by Adam. Note the particularity of this expression, "even so—in Christ shall all be made alive."

throne of God." "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16. He is now become the "first fruits of them that slept." His resurrection established and insured the resurrection of all mankind. "For," says Paul, "if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." 1 Cor. xv. 16. "But now is Christ risen from the dead." "In Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 20, 22. Christ said to his disciples, "yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. Paul speaks of death as though it had penetrated the whole creation. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." Rom. viii. 22. Christ's death was felt through all his works. In that awful moment when he expired on Calvary's top, death felt the mortal wound, and gave one struggle for dominion through the works of nature. Then did the earth shake terribly; then did the rocks rend; then did the mountains move; then did the affrighted sun shrink from his suffering God, and veil his face in darkness. The bands of death were loosened; "the graves were opened;" the sleeping bodies felt their liberty, and started into life. "O death where is thy sting?" Destroyed forever. "Sing, O heavens! and be joyful, O earth! and break forth into singing, O mountains!" Let the wilderness rejoice, let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let "all the trees of the plain clap their hands." Death is destroyed. "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes." The way of life is now clear. The clouds are dispersed; and the glories of redemption burst upon us in their full splendor. The last enemy shall be destroyed. But,

### III. What are the consequences of his destruction?

1. The malice of Satan will revert upon his own head; his fraudulent designs against man's happiness will terminate in the glory of God. The old serpent, subtil, envious, revengeful, thought to dishonor God's government, in seducing man to rebellion, and in subjecting him to mortality. But immediately "the seed" was revealed, that should "bruise the serpent's

head ;" that should counteract and frustrate all his evil machinations. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John iii. 8. Christ assumed our nature, "that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Heb. ii. 14. Satan undoubtedly supposed he had defeated the gracious designs of Heaven for man's redemption, by effecting the crucifixion of Christ. But even in his last effort, his malicious schemes turned to his own destruction. Christ's death destroyed death. It gave Satan his mortal wound. It began to dig that mine which is rapidly advancing under his kingdom, and which will finally ingulph it in ruin.

Another important consequence of the destruction of the last enemy is, the restoration of the dead to immortality. "The hour is coming, when all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Paul, speaking of the resurrection of the dead, says, "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." "This corruptible, must put on incorruption ; and this mortal must put on immortality." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying, death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 42, &c. "Life and immortality are brought to light." The vale that was planted with terrors, and overhung with awful shades, now smiles in beauty, and beams with light. A flood of glory bursts from the Son of righteousness, shines through the wastes of death, and discovers man restored from ruin ; rejoicing in life, and dressed in the robes of immortality. Now we may rejoice ; now we may triumph. Death, thou art destroyed. "Where is thy sting ? Grave ! where is thy victory ?" Death ! thy dart is broken ; thy sceptre is wrenched from thy hand ; thy pale throne totters ; it sinks beneath thee ! Rejoice, O man ! victory is thine, through the dying Saviour. Look forward, view thy future self, how changed from this imperfect state ; beyond the reach of death ! Rejoice in that period, when the voice of God shall sound through the universe, and set the prisoners free.



Thus it appears, that though death is our enemy, our last and most formidable enemy, yet, he "shall be destroyed."

Will not this consideration afford us consolation for the loss of our worthy friend, whose death we this day lament? Him the last week lodged in the still house of death. But though he is dead, yet shall he live. For his enemy, his last enemy, shall be destroyed. Death may be considered as an enemy, not only to those who experience his agonies, but to those who survive.

To the mourning widow, the loss of Dr. MANNING must be deeply affecting. The kind, the indulgent husband, snatched unexpectedly from the midst of life, and health, and usefulness; torn from her bosom;—he, her other half, the partner of her joys, the reliever of her sorrows, is now wrapped in the cold ground. Farewell, my friend: But must thou go?—O, my God, to thee, to thee, I yield! "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night." "The last enemy shall be destroyed." Cease to weep. "Behold the upright, for his end is peace."

The absent relatives will sensibly feel the loss of their friend and brother. In both these capacities, he sustained an amiable character. As a brother, he was loving and affectionate; as a friend, he was constant and sincere. But his kind offices will no more be experienced. Cold, silent he lodges in dust. His enemy is now victorious. But "thanks be to God who will give man the victory."

The death of our friend has intimately affected the interests of the College in this place. It has drawn the veil of sorrow over her windows, and hung her walls with sable weeds. A melancholy silence reigns through all her mansions, save when the plaintive voice of woe is heard at midnight. That seat of learning was the child of our departed friend. It lay near his heart. His friends, the corporation, most sincerely lament their loss. God has of late called to you; once and again—and again.\* Thrice has the pale foot of death stepped down among your number; thrice has his voice penetrated your ears: "Be

\* Referring to the death of John Jenckes, and Nicholas Brown, Esquires, which preceded Dr. Manning's.

ye also ready." Though you suffer loss, yet ascribe thanks to him, "that was dead, and is alive, and lives forever."

The immediate officers of instruction disburden their grief, and drop the friendly tear. Their faithful assistant in the labors of science is no more. But though he is a prisoner of the tomb, yet he shall be brought into the "liberty of the children of God." "For the last enemy shall be destroyed."

The students perhaps at present suffer the heaviest loss. To you death has come near in his late approach. He has taken away your literary guide and parent. Will not the love you bore him stamp his memory on your hearts? Will not the recollection of his friendship gush the tear of affectionate sorrow, and sprinkle it on his tomb? Call to mind his anxious solicitude for your welfare; call to mind his readiness to accelerate your progress in the paths of science. Treasure up his wise instructions. As he was once young like yourselves, as he had trod the paths before you, he was qualified to give the best advice. Experience had taught him the difficulties you have to encounter, and the dangers to which you are exposed. Often did he, with all the affection of a parent, recommend an unwearied application to your literary pursuits. Often did he dissuade you from vice. How earnestly did he beg you to fly from it, as from a most deadly enemy? How often did he urge you to maintain a fair moral character? How frequently did his fervent soul, for your prosperity, rise on the wings of prayer to the throne of mercy? If you will do justice to yourselves, if you will do justice to the kind endeavors of your parents, you will regard the advice of your worthy President. Let it sink deep into your hearts, let it regulate your future conduct. The present, with you, is an important period. Your characters are now forming for future life. You know that vice and indolence will make you miserable; that virtue and industry will make you happy. Your usefulness and respectability in future life depend very much on your personal exertions. Lose not one of your golden moments. But amidst all your acquisitions "get understanding." "Seek first the kingdom of God: and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added." "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth." Religion and

virtue will add the lustre to all your literary acquirements. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;" while he comes near to you by the solemn voice of death. Improve this mournful scene of mortality to your own advantage. Be wise, be happy.

The attentive gravity of this church and congregation, evinces that they sensibly feel the stroke of that enemy that has laid their friend in dust. He has been "a light to your feet;" he has been "a lamp to your path." To you he has been a guide to the road of life. Often did he come to you "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Oft did his tongue announce to you "glad tidings of great joy." But, alas! it is now silent forever. This church and people lay near his heart. Those of you who have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, under his ministry, must, on the present mournful occasion, be deeply affected. You have lost a father indeed. In his last affectionate address to you from this place, when he bade you farewell, when he expressed the improbability of his ever preaching to you again, you could not restrain your tears. Sorrow indeed must now fill your hearts, because his face will no more be seen in the land of the living. Remember that God gave, and that God took away. Hear his voice—"Be still, and know that I am GOD."

The loss of this worthy man will be felt by the community at large. He moved in an extensive sphere. He was equally known in the religious, the political and literary world. As his connexions were extensive and important, his loss must be proportionably great. As a man, he was kind, humane and benevolent. As he was sociable, as he was communicative, he seemed rather designed for the theatre of action than for the shades of retirement. Though nature had given him distinguished abilities, yet the peculiarity of his constitution, and the varied scene of his life, prevented that intense application to study, which generally renders men eminent in the republic of letters. His life was a scene of anxious labor for the benefit of others. His piety and fervent zeal in preaching the gospel of Christ, evinced his love to his God and to his fellow men. His eloquence was forcible and spontaneous. To every one who heard him, under



the peculiar circumstances in which he appeared in this place, it was evident that the resources of his mind were exceedingly great. The amiableness of his disposition was recommended by a dignified and majestic appearance. His address was manly, familiar and engaging. His manner was easy without negligence, and polite without affectation. In the College over which he presided, his government was mild and peaceful ; conducted by that persuasive authority, which secures obedience while it conciliates esteem. As he lived much beloved, he died much lamented. Well may we say, that “ a great man is fallen.” O how is the amiable, the worthy, the benevolent, fallen ! Though fallen, yet shall he rise ; for his “last enemy shall be destroyed.” “The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise.” Then shall the man be delivered from the “bondage of corruption,” to “shine like the sun in the firmament.” Cease to mourn, dry up your tears ; submit to Him “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty ;” submit to Him who is “the first begotten of the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ;” to Him let us ascribe “glory and dominion for ever and ever.”



A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE

BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE IN

PROVIDENCE,

ON LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON, OCT., 14, 1798,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

WELCOME ARNOLD, ESQ.,

ONE OF THE TRUSTEES OF RHODE-ISLAND COLLEGE, AND MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THIS STATE, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE SEPTEMBER 29, 1798, IN THE 54TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.



TO THE  
SURVIVING AFFLICTED WIDOW  
AND CHILDREN OF  
WELCOME ARNOLD, ESQ.,

The following Sermon is inscribed, with the sincerest  
desires for their present and future happiness, by their  
friend and very humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

## A S E R M O N .

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IT IS SOWN IN CORRUPTION, IT IS RAISED IN INCORRUPTION; IT IS SOWN IN DISHONOR, IT IS RAISED IN GLORY; IT IS SOWN IN WEAKNESS, IT IS RAISED IN POWER; IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY, IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY. 1 COR. xv. 42, 43, 44.

THE love of existence,\* and the desire of knowing futurity, may be ranked among the strongest propensities of the human heart. The first of these is repressed by death, the last is encouraged by the prospect of a resurrection. So great is our attachment to happiness, and so great our aversion to misery, that whatever discloses to us our future state, cannot but be highly interesting and important. We must therefore feel peculiarly indebted to our beneficent Creator, for assuring us of the resurrection of our bodies. The language of the Saviour was, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." He who was caught up into the third heaven said, "the trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." John, when he beheld in vision the resurrection, said, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God—and the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them." But our inquiries may perhaps extend farther than merely to ascertain the fact of the resurrection of the dead. We may be disposed to ask, as some did in the Corinthian church, "how are the dead raised? and with what body do they come?" These questions imply a desire to know the manner in which the resurrection should be effected. They also imply a disposition to

doubt the resurrection, unless the persons who proposed them should have their inquisitive curiosity fully gratified. This is the reason why the Apostle replies with severity, and says, "thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat or some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." The Apostle in these words reproves the unreasonableness of those who are disposed to doubt or deny a fact, merely because they cannot comprehend the manner in which it is accomplished. He intimates that there is nothing more mysterious or unintelligible in the resurrection of the body, than there is in the germination of a grain of wheat. This, when cast into the earth, will neither spring nor grow, unless it dies. But who can tell how the death of that which is sown, is essential to the life and growth of that which springs up? That this is the case we cannot deny, though the manner in which the fact is accomplished is entirely beyond our comprehension. When the bare grain is sown in the earth, the future body of that grain is not sown. The grain dies, the principle of life ascends, and God clothes it with such a body as he pleases. The Apostle proceeds to show that there will be different grades of people in the resurrection, and that then there will be as great a diversity in the bodies and appearances of men as there is in the present state. These ideas are implied in the following words. "All flesh is not the same flesh; there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial. The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another of the stars; for as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." But though there will be in the world of the resurrection such a diversity in the bodies of men, yet there are certain circumstances in which they will all agree. These are expressed in our text. "It (body) is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor



it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

1. The body is said to be sown in corruption. This expression includes the whole state of man, from his first formation till the morning of his resurrection. For there is a contrast kept up through the text, between man's mortal and immortal state. Man, like all animated nature, is subjected to the great law of corruptibility. The condition of things is such, in this world, that wherever there is life, there must be death. When we consider the constant tendency of animal substance to putrefaction, and the numerous external and internal causes which may induce it, we are astonished that men should continue so long in life as they do. What preserves us one moment from experiencing the effects of corruptibility, we cannot tell, unless it is the immediate and constant agency of God. For all the animal and vegetable substances we consume for the support of life, would afford us no nourishment, unless they would dissolve by putrefaction. It is from this that we derive our life ; and yet as soon as it attacks our constitution we change into the same, we die and turn to dust. The inspired Apostle was so sensible of the corruptible state of man's body, that he used the emphatical expression in the text, "it is sown in corruption," as if it was buried in it. It does not appear that when man was in innocency, he was exempt from corruption, any farther than by the supernatural bounty of God. Adam, when placed in Paradise, had access to the tree of life. By means of this he might perpetuate his constitution in health and vigor. Man never had any other kind of immortality in this world ; for, considered as an animal, he must die, unless the decays and diseases of his nature were remedied by the tree of life. By disobedience to the command of God, Adam subjected himself and all his posterity to death. When excluded the garden, he beheld the flaming sword guarding the way of the tree of life. What must have been his consternation to feel the attacks of disease, without having access to the tree of life ! Alas ! he must sink into the shadow of death, and be "sown in corruption." Thus death entered the world, and ever since has been executing his dread commission, and burying the human race in ruin. But

shall man forever be the prey of all-devouring death? Shall his body be forever lost in the grave? Surely not, for though it is sown in corruption, our text assures us—

2. "It is raised in incorruption." A state of incorruptibility is so different from the present, that we can form but an imperfect idea of it. We can scarcely conceive how bodies can subsist, in the utmost vigor and activity, without the aid of nourishment. And yet, in the world of the resurrection, this will certainly be the case; for there we shall be as the angels of God. For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. So then shall be brought to pass the saying, as it is written, "death is swallowed up in victory." If we shall have obtained a complete victory over death, we shall be free from disease and pain. These are his attendants, and these must fall, when the king is dethroned and buried in ruin. The bodies of the righteous and the wicked will be raised in the same manner, and alike be incorruptible and immortal. Their difference, as to happiness and misery, will result wholly from the moral state of their minds. Christ said of the righteous, that they should shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. With what extasy will they triumph, when they look back over the vast chasm of ruin which yawns from the walls of Eden to the barriers of eternity; when they feel immortal vigor springing within them, and behold immortal youth blooming in every face! May they not with propriety exclaim, O! death, where is thy sting? O! grave, where is thy victory?

3. The next trait in the state of man, as to his body, is, that "it is sown in dishonor."—This was not the state of man when he came from the forming hand of the Almighty. He was made in the image of God; he held dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea. The Psalmist, addressing God, says, concerning man, "thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." But alas! man being in honor, abode not! He fell into disgrace by revolting against his Maker. As soon as he lost the honor in which he was formed, the whole animated world shunned his society, and refused to submit to his dominion. He was surrounded with enemies, and liable to dis-

solution. The completion of his disgrace was death ; for God said to him, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is the sentence executed on the criminal. Thus man is "sown in dishonor." But let us not dwell on the dark side of the picture. The text assures us, that—

4. "He is raised in glory."—Man, by his fall from primitive rectitude, appeared to dishonor God, his Creator. His body, by its liability to pain, disease and death, appeared unworthy the great Builder of the universe. But how wonderfully will God's glory appear, when his voice shall call to the sleeping millions ; when they shall rise from their graves free from corruption, vigorous and immortal ? Will not here be a greater manifestation of divine power, than in the creation of a thousand inanimate worlds ? But though the resurrection of all will display the glory of God, yet that of believers in a more peculiar manner, and in a higher degree. For they will be fashioned like to Christ's glorious body ! "When Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory." They will be clothed in the brightness of the sun, and sit with Christ in his kingdom. Thus they will be raised in glory.

5. In the next place, the text says, concerning the body, "it is sown in weakness."—No animal is brought into the world in so feeble and helpless a condition as man. He possesses neither the power nor means of subsistence. The preservation of his life requires the perpetual assiduity of others. "At his best estate he is altogether vanity." A breath of air, a spark of fire, the falling of a tile, may destroy his grandeur, and lodge him in the grave. When he sinks into death, he is helpless as a clod of earth, and a worm becomes his master. But the body will not always remain in this state ; for—

6. "It is raised in power."—Angels are represented as exalted beings, and excelling in might. The Saviour said, concerning those who should obtain the resurrection, "they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Their nerves will be strung with unfailing vigor : weakness and disease can never reach them : eternity itself cannot weary their utmost exertions in the service of God. When the dead shall rise, all nature will feel the power of God.



The skies will burst asunder : the heavens will be wrapped in flames, and the elements will melt : the archangel's voice will shake the pillars of the universe : all is in commotion : heaven bends from above, earth trembles from beneath : the tombs burst, " the charnel houses rattle : " the graves open : the tenants of death start from their bondage, and spring into life : the Son of Man comes in a cloud, with power and great glory, to judge the nations. Such are the effects of Omnipotence, when the body of man is raised in power.

7. " It is also sown a natural body ; " that is, an animal body ; a body formed of perishable materials, and liable to corruption and dissolution. Man, according to the Apostle Paul, consists of three parts, body, soul and spirit. Thus he says to the Thessalonians, " I pray your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless. " By the body, we are to understand the external material form ; by the soul, the rational faculty ; and by the spirit, the principle of sensation which pervades every part of man, unites his soul and body, conveys knowledge to the former, and energy to the latter. This spirit is the medium through which the soul converses with the external world. It sees in the eye, hears in the ear, smells in the nostrils, tastes in the mouth, and fills us all over with sensibility. Brutes partake of this spirit as well as man. It may properly be styled the sensitive soul, in opposition to the rational soul which distinguishes man from brutes, and gives him his chief pre-eminence. This distinction on which I am insisting will explain that passage of Solomon, in which he represents the spirit of a man, when he dies, as going upward, and the spirit of a beast as going downward. This distinction also will show us precisely, what part of man is lodged in the grave. The spirit, or sensitive soul of man goes upward and lives, because it is indissolubly connected with the rational soul, which is immortal. Thus the sensitive soul serves as a vehicle for the rational, and probably furnishes it with materials of knowledge in the other world, as well as in this. Thus when man dies, he is sown a natural body only ; for his other parts ascend and live forever. But the body though it is dissolved, is not lost ; for it,

8. " Is raised a spiritual body. " By this we are not to un-

derstand that the body, at the resurrection, will be changed into the nature of spirits, because in this case it could not properly be called a body; for Christ said, a spirit hath not flesh and bones. These we shall still have after the resurrection, in the same manner as Christ had after his resurrection. Our bodies will be raised spiritual, because they will not then be supported by natural aids, as animal bodies are, but will be as the angels, as to the manner of existence, pure, subtil, undecaying, and incorruptible. This state, in the sublime language of inspiration, is styled "the glorious liberty of the children of God." This state belongs exclusively to those who die in the faith of the gospel. Glorious state indeed, in which those who once were victims to the meanest worm, shall stand on an equality with angels! Language fails to describe the glory of the resurrection world. I will hazard the assertion, that there is not a person in this assembly who would not exchange the whole material universe, for a bodily constitution not liable to disease, to pain, to decay or inactivity. Who is there who would not be willing to die, and lodge in the earth thousands and millions of years, could he be assured of a happy resurrection in an incorruptible body, filled with celestial life, and blooming in immortal youth? One year of enjoyment in such a state, will outweigh thousands in this. The Apostle Paul has reference to this state when he styles its enjoyment "an eternal weight of glory." This weight of glory is the prize which the gospel hangs out to every son and daughter of Adam! How ought it to excite our ambition, that we may obtain the happy resurrection, and become children of God! From the preceding account of the mortal and immortal state of man, I beg leave to observe,

1. That death is not the means of destroying, but of improving our existence. For surely if we are sown in corruption, and raised in incorruption; if we are sown in dishonor, and raised in glory; if we are sown in weakness, and raised in power; if we are sown natural bodies, and raised spiritual; our last state is manifestly better than our first. The Apostle says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Our bodies in their present state are by no means fitted for the enjoyments of that blissful mansion. Death takes down these polluted tabernacles,

and the holy hand of Omnipotence rebuilds them. In the present world we bear the mutilated image of the earthy Adam ; in the future we shall bear the perfect image of the heavenly. "For as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy ; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." "The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven." How much better to be like Christ than to be like fallen man ! How anxious ought we to be, that we may not, through unbelief and sin, fail of the resurrection of the sons of God ! If we believe in Christ, he is our life ; and when he appears, we shall also appear with him in glory. "For the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and ever dwell with the Lord."

2. I observe, in the next place, that if we gain so much by the resurrection, we ought to be satisfied with the divine providence concerning death. This dispensation, considered in a detached point of view, appears gloomy, and productive of no good consequences. But if we consider its connexion with the fall and restoration of man, and the glory of God arising from them, it will appear to be a wise and good appointment. This consideration may tend to alleviate the sorrows of those who mourn on the present occasion. You, my much respected friends, have been unexpectedly deprived of your nearest and most beloved earthly connexion. In him you lost an affectionate husband, a kind and indulgent parent. The public sensibly feels your loss, as well as its own, and shares in your grief. For support in your affliction, permit me to direct your attention to the great Disposer of all events. He can do no wrong to his creatures ; for he is perfectly wise and good. If he subjects us to death, it is on account of sin, and that through the merits of his Son, he may raise us to a more glorious state. In this dark world you can have but an imperfect view of the divine economy. We see but in part, and we know but in part. This consideration shows the necessity of reposing confidence in God, and resigning ourselves to his disposal. May he who has taken away your friend, make up your loss, by the friendship of himself ; guide you through life, and crown you with immortal glory, in that



kingdom where tears shall be wiped from every eye, and God shall dwell in every heart.

3. I observe, in the next place, that since we are subjected to the law of mortality, the highest motives of duty, interest and happiness, urge us to a preparation for death, that our resurrection may be glorious and happy. To obtain this, it is essential that we entertain sincere sorrow for our sins; that we possess real evangelical faith in Christ, and adorn our conduct with all the virtues of a holy life. For if we remain impenitent, unbelieving and immoral, we remain opposed to God, we reject that as falsehood which he declares to be truth, and attach to ourselves the characters of those who cannot inherit his kingdom. Dying in such a state, we must be miserable, and our resurrection that of condemnation. We should possess all that anxiety which distinguished the Apostle Paul, when he said he was made conformable unto Christ's death, "if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." To us the possession of life is utterly uncertain. He whose unexpected departure we now lament, was but a few days since, in the vigour of life and activity, pursuing the business of this world with the most enterprising energy, adding nerves to society and government, and filling with high reputation offices of public trust. But alas! his days were numbered, and he yielded to the solemn mandate of heaven. Let us, my friends, hear the voice of this alarming visitation, crying to us, "be ye also ready." Let us not delude ourselves, by imagining that any thing here on earth can screen us from the dart which flies from the king of terrors. We may exult in the morning of life; we may triumph in the vigor of manhood; we may enjoy the most liberal endowments of nature; we may protract our age, till our locks are whitened with the blossoms of eternity; yet still we must submit to the solemn empire of death. The sentence has proceeded from the lips of the Almighty, and cannot return. Such is our just but awful destiny. We are the appointed heirs of sorrow, pain and dissolution. Every moment brings us nearer the land of death and silence. Thither we shall soon arrive, and mingle our dust in undistinguished ruin. The blooming infant, the active youth, the valiant man, the father of other days, the

sage, the hero, the monarch and the Christian ; all these must resort to the universal rendezvous of animated being. There the slave will forget his chain, and the master his empire. The monarch will there lose his grandeur, and the subject his fear. There all the anxieties and endearments of life will cease. The husband will no more remember the partner of his joys, nor the wife the babe that moulders at her side. All that is great, alluring and splendid in life, must be exchanged for the solitary house of death. Let us then be excited to prepare for that solemn period, in which we must launch into the vast ocean of eternity ! God is visiting our country with the most distressing calamities. In some of our populous cities we behold the most dreadful pestilence devouring thousands. The angel of destruction is commissioned to chastise us for our sins. He swings his enormous scythe and mows down a vast harvest of mortality. A kind providence has hitherto spared us, and surrounded us with the bounties of prosperity. This distinguishing goodness calls aloud for our gratitude and love. God warns us by his judgments, and visits us with his mercies. If he calls to us, and we refuse, will he not “ laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh ? ” Let us work while it is day, remembering that “ the night cometh, in which no man can work. ” May we all be enabled, by divine grace, to obtain the resurrection of the just, that at the great consummation of all things, we may shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father. AMEN.

REASON OF THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH.

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A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED IN THE

BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE IN PROVIDENCE,

ON

LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 14, 1800.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MRS. MARY GANO,

CONSORT OF THE

REV. STEPHEN GANO.



A FUNERAL SERMON.

O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING? O GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?

1 CORINTHIANS, XV. 55.

THE occasion on which I am called to address this crowded assembly, is truly solemn and impressive. It tells us that we are travelling on to the silent grave and to the tremendous bar of God. We behold our own destiny in the example of others. Millions before us have descended into the gloomy valley, and have exhibited in mouldering ruin all that could promise health, enjoyment and life. In the view of this awful prospect, let us not remain inattentive and unaffected. We are all implicated in the great allotment of mortality. We are not all unconcerned spectators. We are not solitary, independent individuals, but part of one great whole, whose origin, progress and end, are fixed by infinite wisdom. The voice of the tomb, with a chilling sound, assails our ears. The angel of destruction, dark as midnight, and swift as a whirlwind, may soon strike our names from the list of life, and inscribe them in the vast majority of death. Such being our state and our portion, where shall we look for help? From whom shall we derive consolation and support? Shall we not look to him who declared "I am the resurrection and the life," "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel?" It is by knowing him in the power of his resurrection, it is by receiv-

ing his testimony, it is by obeying his commands, that we can rise above the infirmity of our reason and our senses, and possess a hope full of ardor, full of immortality. He who has fled for refuge to the Saviour, who has really believed in him according to the scriptures, can view death as a vanquished enemy. In trouble and affliction, his soul rises above the ordinary efforts of humanity. He views the destruction of death as the end of all his sins and sorrow. He stands aloft on the mountain of God, and with a confidence which no danger can shake, and an extacy which no language can express, exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

From these words I shall explain the reasons of the Christian's triumph over sin and death.

I. He has evidence that he is liberated from the reigning power of sin.

The scriptures represent the unregenerate to be in a state of servitude, wholly governed by the principle of evil. "There is none righteous; no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one." Christ said, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Every thought of the imagination of man's heart was pronounced by God to be evil continually. "The heart of the wicked is fully set in him to do evil." The Apostle John says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." The prevalence of evil in the heart of men, is represented in scripture as a kingdom, as a dominion, as a tyranny. Hence the Apostle Paul speaks of sin "as reigning unto death." To those, therefore, who continue in a state of nature, there is no hope of salvation, and no cause of triumph. They are liable to receive the "wages of sin, which is death." It is the excellency of the gospel, that it brings a principle of spiritual life into the souls of men, delivering them from the bondage of sin, and inspiring them with hopes of future felicity. To this Christ had immediate respect, when he said, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." To the same transit from the

bondage of sin Paul had reference, when he addressed the Ephesians ; “ You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” He declares that “ they were by nature the children of wrath, even as others ;” and adds, “ But God, who is rich in mercy—even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ—for we are his workmanship, created in Christ’ Jesus unto good works.” To the same purpose he says to the Corinthians, “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” “ The real Christian therefore is one who has experienced a renovation of heart ; who has the witness in himself ; who knows in whom he has believed ; and rejoices, that because Christ “ lives, he shall live also.” He realizes what the Apostle Paul said to the Romans, “ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The believer has abundant reason to triumph over death and sin, because he feels the power of Christ in his heart ; and has assurance, by the earnest of the Spirit, that he shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and no more “ be brought into captivity to the law of sin.” He considers natural death as a wise and necessary appointment in the divine economy. He considers the second death as the just punishment of sin, and is assured, that “ on him, *that* death shall have no power.” The love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and while he “ feels the power of the world to come,” he exclaims, in the triumphant language of truth, “ I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord !”

II. Another reason of the Christian’s triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has that he is justified through Christ, and acquitted from condemnation.

Sin is the only thing which has ever rendered men obnoxious to divine justice, and exposed them to punishment. Hence we entertain no hope of exemption from misery, unless we are

pardoned by a special act of divine favor. Pardon implies the remission of punishment, which might be justly inflicted. Hence pardon supposes and implies an acquittal from condemnation. The believer is made sensible of the remission of his sins, for "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost." He is brought into the state in which Paul represents the Corinthians, when they had embraced the gospel. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The Apostle explains and enforces the true import of our text in the words of the subsequent verse. "The sting of death," says he, "is sin." That is, death is an object of terror, and a source of misery, from no consideration except sin. The reason why we fear to undergo the change implied in death is, an apprehension that it will leave us in a state of misery. This apprehension cannot predominate in the mind of him who is justified by Christ, for he is assured, as Paul was, that to die is gain, and to "be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." The Apostle further illustrates the meaning of the text, and says, "the strength of sin is the law." That is, the law points out the nature and consequences of sin, ascertains its just desert, and denounces punishment. To the Romans Paul says, "I had not known sin, but by the law." "Without the law, sin was dead." "I was alive without the law." That is, while he was without a knowledge of the real nature of the law, and the punishment it threatened sin, he entertained hopes of salvation by the law; but, says he, "when the commandment came," in its true import and force, "sin revived," it started up like a tyrant holding him in bondage, "and I died." That is, he gave up all hope of obtaining salvation by his own obedience to the law, and felt himself "shut up" under condemnation. How was he then to be delivered and justified? By the righteousness of Christ. For he declares thus of Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Christ, trusts to his righteousness for salvation, is pardoned, acquitted from condemnation, and of course can with propriety triumph over sin and death, exclaiming with the Apos-

tle, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. Another reason of the Christian's triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has, that his salvation is wholly by the grace of God.

From what has been advanced under the preceding articles, it appears, that he who is brought to believe on Christ, is convinced of the justice of his condemnation by the law, and deprived of all hope of obtaining salvation by it. Hence he knows and realizes that he is saved by grace. Grace is an exercise of favor. It implies, that the person to whom he is manifested is treated better than he has a right to demand. It means the bestowment of good where evil is deserved and may be justly inflicted. Deliverance from the sentence of the law, therefore, and the bestowment of salvation, are the free, sovereign, unmerited gifts of God. This reasoning abundantly corresponds with the language of scripture. Says Paul, "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect." "It is of faith, that it might be by grace," "and if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." In the gospel plan there is no such thing as blending works and grace in the great affair of salvation. Their natures and their provinces are wholly distinct. "To him," says Paul, "that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Believers can say, in the language of truth, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Thus the Christian, convinced from his own experience and from the scriptures that his salvation is by grace, has confidence in himself, but places it all in God. Here is all his hope and all his rejoicing. For he knows that "God is faithful," by whom he was called to the fellowship of his Son. If his salvation was left to his own wavering resolutions, and fee-

ble efforts, he might well despair ; he might well expect never to be free from the “ sting of death and the strength of sin : ” but as he knows that he is “ kept by the power of God,” he can with confidence consider himself as more than conqueror.

IV. Another reason of the Christian’s triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has of the resurrection of Christ. Our assent to the truth of this is to be governed by the testimony of those who were eye witnesses. The fact therefore of Christ’s resurrection, is to be believed on the same ground with historical facts. What, then, do we require in order to our belief of these ? That there should be a sufficient number of witnesses, men of veracity, not governed by interested motives. The accounts given by the Evangelists and Apostles, in these respects, carry irresistible conviction to the mind. Their conduct in asserting the resurrection of Christ, is utterly unaccountable on any supposition, except that of firm belief founded on the resistless evidence of their senses. Like plain honest men, they simply declared the fact. They persisted in declaring it. From what motives could they act ? Did they look for ease, or honor, or wealth ? No ; in asserting the resurrection of Christ, they sacrificed everything usually esteemed among men. They exposed themselves to persecution, distress, poverty and death. Would they have done these things, if they had not possessed sufficient evidence that Christ had risen from the dead ? The immediate disciples of Christ did not seem to understand him, when he repeatedly assured them that he should die, and that he should rise on the third day. When he was crucified, they seem to have despaired of the cause in which they had embarked. Could any thing but the clearest evidence dispel their doubts, and revive their confidence ? When they saw their Master hanging on the cross, suffering death, the greatest of all human calamities, could any trivial motive, could any probable testimony, induce them to engage again in his cause, and expose themselves to the vengeance of his murderers ? Reason says, no. Common sense and common experience say, no. What evidence, then, had the disciples, which convinced them ? I answer, the evidence of their senses. “ To them Christ, af-

ter his passion, showed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The Apostle Paul had been a great enemy of Christ and his followers. He persecuted them even unto strange cities. Yet violent and obstinate as he was he was convinced of his error, and became a zealous supporter of Christ's resurrection. He supposed this doctrine to be a fiction, a doctrine injurious to himself and his nation. We may therefore be assured, that he did not embrace it without the most impressive evidence. This evidence he states thus—"For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins—that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day; and that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; after this he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles; and last of all, he was seen of me also."—This account was written by the Apostle Paul but a few years after the resurrection. He had all the means necessary to produce full conviction, and he received with joy the doctrine he had labored to exterminate. The evidences of the resurrection have been handed down to us through the testimony of relators, and are as direct and full as the evidences of any fact recorded in profane history. I am persuaded that no man, who sufficiently examines these evidences, can withhold his belief of the resurrection of Christ. If he can, he can disbelieve all history without exception. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of Christianity. "If Christ is not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins." "But now is Christ risen." Of course the Christian is assured that he shall be like him; that he shall be fashioned like to Christ's glorious body, and with him shall live, and reign, and triumph forever.

V. Another reason of the Christian's triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has that all mankind shall be raised.

For the knowledge of the resurrection of the body we are wholly indebted to divine revelation. Our faith in this doctrine rests exclusively on the testimony of God. It is not analogous

to any known laws of nature, that animal bodies, once dead and dissolved into their original principles, should be reorganized, and reanimated. These effects, however, fall within the limits of Omnipotence, and though they are beyond the established laws of nature, they do not imply a contradiction to them. The resurrection of the body is abundantly asserted in the scriptures, particularly in those of the new Testament. Christ said, "The hour is coming when all that are in the graves—shall come forth." The Apostle Paul says thus, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." The first fruits were a pledge and assurance of the subsequent harvest. In like manner Christ's resurrection is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The doctrine of the resurrection constituted a chief part of the preaching of the Apostles. In the 4th chapter of Acts, it is said of Peter and John, that the priests and the captains of the temple were grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. In the 18th chapter, Paul declares to king Agrippa, that the Jews had accused him on account of his hope of the resurrection, and says, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" To the Athenians, the same Apostle preached "Jesus and the resurrection." To the Corinthians he said, "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his power." There appear to be two different resurrections spoken of in the scriptures. The first is described by Paul, thus—"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." John the revelator describes the same thus—"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years

were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The second and general resurrection is described thus by Christ—"The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." John says, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God—and the sea gave up the dead that were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them."—Thus it appears from the scriptures, that all mankind will be raised from the dead. The resurrection of those who believe in Christ, is taught more fully in the scriptures, than the resurrection of the wicked. The reason of this doubtless was, that believers, particularly in the primitive ages of the Church, might be encouraged to persevere. Paul says to the Romans—"If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit which dwelleth in you." To the Philippians he says of Christ—"Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." To the Corinthians he says—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The Christian, then, has great reason to triumph over sin and death ; for he has a well grounded hope, that his body will be raised up from death, freed from sin, rendered glorious, spiritual, incorruptible, and capable of endless felicity in heaven.

VI. Another reason of the Christian's triumph over sin and death is, the evidence he has that after the resurrection he shall be admitted to complete eternal happiness in heaven.

It is evident from the scriptures, that believers, immediately after death, enter into happiness. Paul said thus—"For me to die is gain." "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. The voice from heaven said to John

—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth;" that is, their blessedness will commence as soon as they die. The state which intervenes between death and the final judgment, is in the scriptures termed Hades.* Into this state both the righteous and the wicked enter, though it is neither the final state of happiness for the former, nor of misery for the latter. It was into this state that the soul of Christ entered after his crucifixion. The Apostle Peter applies the words of the Psalmist to him, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," or Hades. Christ, by descending into this region, established his power in it. For says Paul, "For this cause Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and living." Hence it follows, that death does not destroy nor even interrupt the kingdom of Christ. This kingdom reaches forward and is continued into the invisible state, and through that to final happiness in heaven. Christ said thus:—"I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell, or Hades, shall not prevail against it." What are we to understand by the gates of Hades? Undoubtedly they mean death, because death lets us into that invisible state. By the gates of Hades not prevailing against the Church, we are to understand, that death neither destroys the soul, nor suspends its powers and enjoyments, but only separates it from the body, and introduces it into that world which will continue till the resurrection. Whatever was terrible in this state, has been removed by Christ. He has rendered the path luminous to all his followers. Believers will doubtless enjoy great happiness in this state, but when their bodies shall be raised incorruptible, and united to their souls, their happiness will exceed all conception.

It will be a "crown of life, and an eternal weight of glory." Just so sure as Christ has died, and entered the invisible state, just so sure we must die, and enter that state. Just so sure as he has risen, just so sure we shall rise. Just so sure as he now reigns in glory, just so sure we shall reign with him, for we shall "see him as he is, and shall be like him." All real Christians who die in faith, will be brought forth from Hades to the resur-

* See Dr. Campbell's critical dissertations.

rection of life. Christ, who is their king and judge, will say to them—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." They will then take possession of that inheritance which has been reserved in heaven for them; an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Thus by the light of scripture we can trace the progress of those who embrace the gospel, not only through this world, but through death, through the invisible intervening world, and to the state of eternal glory in heaven. When they arrive at that mansion beyond the reach of sin and sorrow, and pain, and death, and hell; with what extasy will they adore that power, and wisdom, and goodness, which have brought them out of all their tribulations, to a kingdom of pure delight, where sun, and moon, and stars shall fade, and the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and their God their glory? The great family of the redeemed will then be more than conquerors, and with a shout that shall ring through heaven will exclaim, "O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?"

Having brought into view the reasons of the Christian's triumph over sin and death, I shall now close the subject, by making one general remark, and giving it a brief illustration. The remark I would make is this—That the doctrines advanced in the preceding discourse are peculiar and distinguishing to revelation; and that they are admirably adapted to man, as a fallen, sinful being. Under the three first particulars it was shown that the Christian had reason to triumph over sin and death, from the evidence he has, that the reigning power of sin over his heart is destroyed; that he is justified and acquitted from condemnation by the righteousness of Christ, and that his salvation is wholly by the grace of God. The writings of the ancient philosophers, though professedly designed for the reformation and happiness of man, contain no such doctrines as these. They are above all human wisdom. They apply to the heart, which is the seat of all man's wickedness. They are calculated to make the tree good, that its fruit also may be good. That religion can be of no real use to man, which does not inspire his heart with good principles. The first thing that real relig-

ion, the religion of the bible, implies, is a renovation of the moral temper. If it did not proceed farther, it would leave man in despair as to final happiness. For he would still feel himself a sinner, and liable to suffer the penalty of the divine law. The scriptures, in the next place, present the righteousness of Christ, by which the sinner is justified, accepted and pardoned. His fears are now allayed, and he has a "hope, like an anchor to the soul, sure and stedfast." He boasts no righteousness of his own, and is convinced that his deliverance has proceeded from the free grace of God. This doctrine is calculated to humble his pride, and make him place all his dependence on God. Such is the excellency of the Christian doctrine.

Under the three last particulars of the preceding discourse, it was shown that the Christian had reason to triumph over sin and death, from the evidence he has that Christ has risen from the dead; that mankind will be raised, and that he shall finally be received to eternal happiness in heaven. These doctrines, like those just mentioned, are peculiar to revelation. Though they lie more out of the reach of common experience, because they are wholly founded on testimony, yet they are not less true, nor less firmly embraced by the Christian. It is enough for him that they are contained in a revelation, bearing the most prominent features of a divine original. He assents to the resurrection of Christ, because he thinks it attested by witnesses amply sufficient; he assents to the resurrection of mankind because it is abundantly asserted in the testimony of God; for the same reason he assents to the final happiness of the believer. It is not essential to a Christian, that he should be able to comprehend the manner in which theological truths consist, nor the manner in which prophesied events and facts will take place. To ascertain these things, so far as practicable, is properly the province of reason. The Christian assents solely on the ground of God's testimony. This assent is what the scriptures denominate faith. It implies a perfect surrender of the heart and intellect to God. And hence it is that so much importance is attached to faith, and that it is ranked first in the catalogue of all moral and divine virtues. The exercise of faith is perfectly

reasonable and consistent. For man, in his present dark imperfect state, cannot comprehend all truths which it is essential to his happiness to admit and practise. Hence Paul says—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." It attaches on things invisible—it realizes their existence, so that they exert an influence on the heart, and become governing principles of action. Hence the Apostle says—"We walk by faith, not by sight." What strong and exalted motives must he act from, who firmly believes that he shall be raised from the dead, and that if he endures to the end in virtue, he shall be saved?

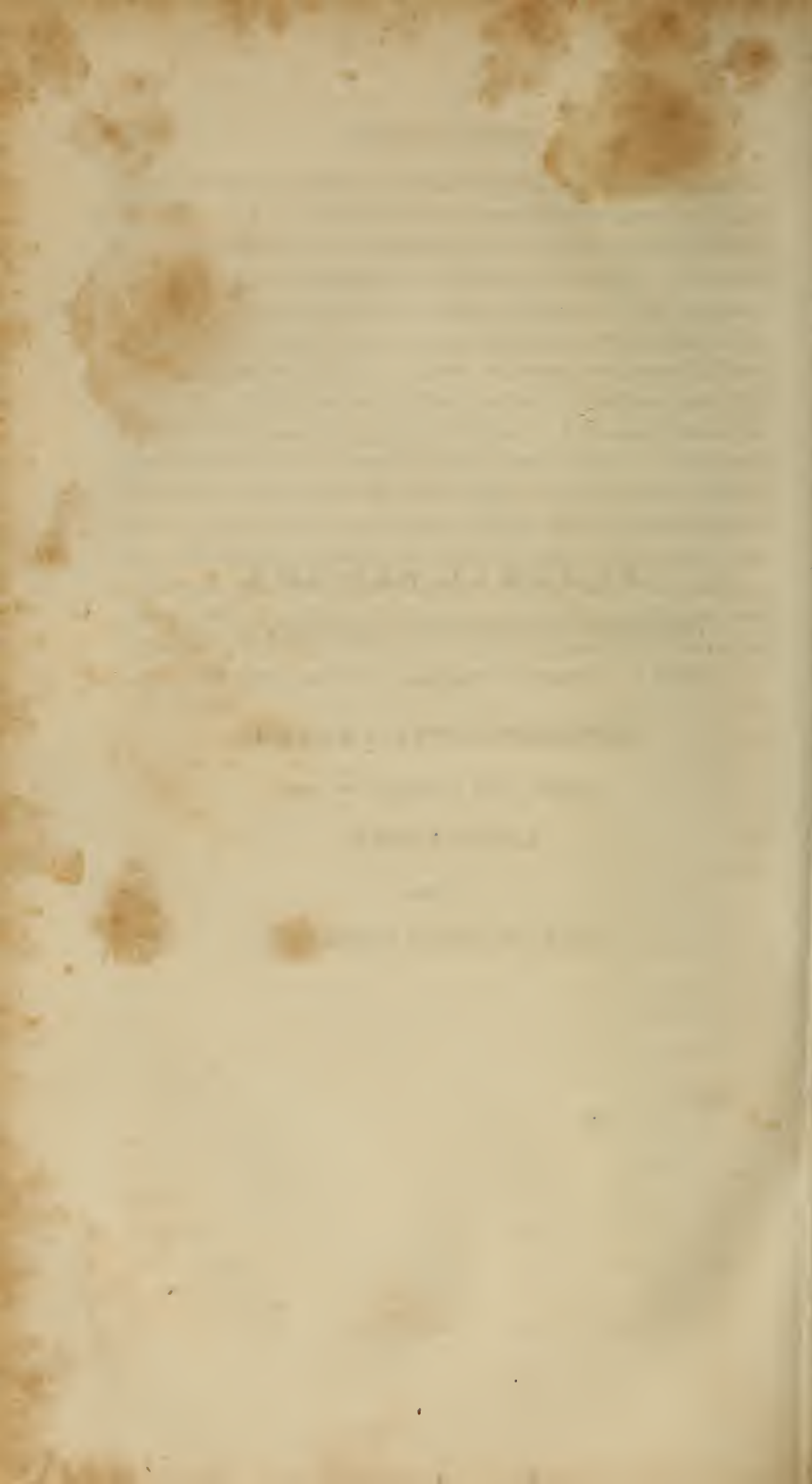
The preceding doctrines and observations are calculated to alleviate the sufferings, sorrows and calamities, of the present life. Receiving, experiencing and believing the truth, we shall be persuaded, "that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

I shall now conclude this occasion by a short address to the venerable and much respected Pastor of this Church, together with the bereaved parent, and nearest connexions of the deceased.

You, sir, have been frequently led through the thorny vale of affliction and sorrow. God has laid his hand heavily upon you so that you have been "in deaths oft." I am persuaded that your hope is in God, and that your trials make you feel the value of the truths of the gospel. You can doubtless say, as did the Apostle Paul,—“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” God has begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ. This hope is the anchor of the soul, and will help you to ride out every tempest. Troubles and afflictions are designed by God to prepare his children for heaven. The Apostles exhorted Christians, to “continue in the faith, as it was through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God.” Of these it is said—"These are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." That Master whom you serve has said—"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

May you, and the children which God has given you, be blessed in your trouble ; and may they remember their Creator ; may they receive your pious instructions, and follow your pious example, that their progress through life may be useful ; their exit from it triumphant, and their destiny glorious. The surviving parent, children and connexions, may derive consolation from the consideration, that they cannot “sorrow as those who have no hope.” The deceased had made God her refuge, and had sincerely embraced the gospel of Christ. You have reason to believe that she has entered into that rest, where sin, and pain, and sorrow, and death, will never come. Of what vast importance is it that you be prepared to follow her ? You are hastening to the house appointed for all the living. You must soon lodge there in darkness and silence. May you receive with resignation the admonitions of heaven, and may the affliction you suffer, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and “work for you an exceeding and eternal weight of glory !” AMEN.

A
FUNERAL SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 17, 1817,
IN THE
REPRESENTATIVES' CHAMBER,
BEFORE BOTH BRANCHES OF THE
LEGISLATURE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following discourse when delivered had not been written. I had merely stated its principal divisions, with a few brief illustrations. As an application was made by both branches of the Legislature, for its publication, I did not feel myself at liberty to withhold my assent. The discourse I have reduced to writing, and I am confident that the doctrines it contains, and the words in which they are expressed, are, with some small variations, the same as when delivered. Such as it is, I beg leave to commit it to the candor of the Legislature and the public.

J. M.



A FUNERAL SERMON.

HONORED LEGISLATORS,—

YOU are assembled to deplore the loss, and to consecrate the memory, of your late associates in the services and honors of the State. It has pleased the ALMIGHTY to remove them from the busy scenes of life, and to consign them to the quiet house of death. This awful dispensation of Divine Providence announces to us the precarious tenure of life, and the alarming fragility of all its hopes, its labors, and its honors. Let us hear the warning voice of God ! Let us learn our own destiny in the example of others ! In the late afflictive visitation, you behold several members of this honorable Legislature, whose hopes were as strong, and whose prospects were as bright as your own ; who shared with you the labors of the State ; who equally with you enjoyed the public confidence and esteem ; suddenly arrested in their course, and removed into the eternal world. While we magnify that divine forbearance which has spared us ; and gratefully recognize that Divine Providence which has encircled us with blessings ; let us adore that righteous and mysterious Sovereignty which disposes of all things on the earth and in the heavens ; let us bow to that tremendous Majesty, before whom all human grandeur shrinks into nothing. But while we tremble before the great and everliving God, let us hope and rejoice ; remembering that his goodness is as bound-

less as his power ; that whatever he creates he blesses ; and that he does “not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men.” —Though he has subjected us to death ; yet he has rendered this, to all who embrace and obey the gospel, the means of increased felicity and glory. With only the light of nature for our guide, we can trace the progress of man no farther than the grave. Here he appears fallen and forever lost. But aided by revelation, we can follow him into a future world, and behold him surviving the stroke of death, and triumphing in immortal existence.

The sun of righteousness has poured his rays into the gloomy valley and brightened the region of disembodied spirits. He has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. It is the distinguishing attribute of Christianity, that it dispels the doubts of its votaries, and inspires them with confidence and hope. So strong and lively is this hope in the breast of the Christian, that the scripture describes it “as an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.” To all who regard their future welfare, it becomes an object of the deepest interest to ascertain the grounds on which a Christian builds his hope of existence and happiness beyond the grave. That we may view this subject in the light of divine truth, permit me to call your attention to those words of the apostle Paul, recorded in 2 Cor. v. 6. “Therefore, we are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.”

The uncertainty in which we are involved with regard to futurity, is the principal circumstance which renders death an object of terror. Were our destiny after the present life fully unfolded, our happiness or our misery would be greatly augmented. God, no doubt, has furnished us with as much knowledge as is suitable to our state ; and in a great degree, has wisely concealed from our view, the glories and terrors of a future world. Between these and our present state, the difference is so great, the contrast so tremendous and disproportionate, that a complete disclosure would overwhelm us with astonishment, suspend our powers, and totally disqualify us for the businesses and enjoyments of life. Though we see through a glass darkly, yet we see enough to excite our hopes and our fears ; enough to

alarm the vicious and encourage the virtuous ; enough to rouse up all our exertions to obtain the favor and avoid the displeasure of our Maker. While engrossed in the cares, the toils, and the pleasures of the present life, and regardless of God and futurity, “ we walk by sight, and are children of disobedience ;” but when the terrors of the Lord arrest us ; when we realize that we must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ ; we begin to walk by faith, and feel the power “ of things invisible and eternal.” Faith substantiates these to the mind, and gives them a governing influence over our conduct. Faith discharges the same office to the soul, that the eye does to the body, bringing near and displaying things distant and unseen ; forming a medium of communication between the soul and the future world, and enabling it to rely on the testimony of God. It is the grand peculiarity of the Christian system, that all its great rewards lie in a future world ; and that all its incentives to virtue and dissuaves from vice, are clothed with the weight and importance of eternity. Hence it is, that, in the Scriptures, such mighty virtue is attributed to the principle of faith. It operates as a new sense, which reaches forward beyond life, and lays hold on things distant and unseen, giving them a powerful and decisive influence on the heart and conduct. Christianity, in this point of view, is of incalculable value to society and government. Faith is the governor and director of the Christian. It forms his sentiments, and animates his actions. How powerful, how conspicuous, was its influence on the primitive believers ; especially on the apostle Paul ! Such was his persuasion of the reality of things eternal, that he esteemed all the evils, labors and sufferings of the present world, as of no consideration, in comparison of that eternal weight of glory which is to come. Such was his hope and confidence in God, that he could say, as in the words preceding our text, “ we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” His confidence was greatly increased by the consideration, that God was its author, and had strengthened it by the testimony of his Spirit. “ Now,” says he, “ he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, is God, who also hath given us the earnest

of the Spirit." "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord."

The following important doctrines are contained in these words :

- I. That the soul survives the dissolution of the body.
- II. That Christians at death are received into heaven, where Christ their Lord is, in his glorified body.
- III. That Christians have sufficient reasons to be always confident that they shall exist after death, and be forever with Christ in glory.

These particulars I shall endeavor to illustrate and confirm. I shall then close the service with a short address.

I. I am first to show that the soul survives the dissolution of the body.

On the subject of the immortality of the soul, the ancients entertained various and contradictory opinions. It is, however, apparent, that the predominant belief of the wisest and best philosophers was, that the soul is indestructible and immortal. Of this they seemed to have rather a strong persuasion, than a firm and stable conviction. They saw that man appeared not to answer any determinate and ultimate purpose in the present state. They discovered in his intellectual and moral nature, principles that seemed susceptible of unlimited improvement, desires boundless as eternity. Were these bestowed, merely to be destroyed? To the various desires and instincts of man they saw appropriate objects provided. Could it be supposed that the ardent desire of endless existence was bestowed without a possibility of gratification? Every feeling of the heart revolts at the thoughts of annihilation. It seemed inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to reduce to nonentity such a being as man, almost as soon as he began to exist, before his powers were evolved and carried to perfection. Besides, every thing here appeared confused and disproportionate : Vice often rode in triumph, while virtue grovelled in the dust; evil often pre-

veiled over good, and injustice rioted in the spoils of innocence. A state of retribution or equalization appeared to be demanded or indicated, by the rectoral justice of God. Socrates, the greatest philosopher in all heathen antiquity, contended earnestly for the immortality of the soul. From this he considered man as deriving his principal dignity and worth. It is, however, very apparent from the last words of Socrates to his judges, that his belief in the immortality of the soul, was not unmixed with doubt and uncertainty. Cicero, with all his gigantic powers and lordly virtues, was greatly perplexed on this subject; and after adding to his own profound meditations, the lights of all his predecessors, seemed ardently to desire, rather than firmly to believe, the immortality of the soul. Thus inadequate appears the light of nature, even in the greatest men, on this most important subject.

Among the moderns who have expressed their opinions on it, Doctor Priestley is the most distinguished. The leading principle of his doctrine is, "That man is no more than we see him to be." He is a simple material being. What is called mind, is merely the result of animal organization. There is no foundation in nature for the usual distinction between soul and body, or mind and matter. Mind, or the power of thought, is a mere quality of the brain; resides in it as its proper organ, and by it exhibits all those phenomena that are denominated mental. When the human body is completely formed, organised, and combined, and all the senses operated on by their appropriate objects, the result is thought, or the power of thinking; in the same manner as music proceeds from a complete instrument when struck by a skilful hand. Thus, upon this scheme, mind can have no separate existence. Demolish the organization of the body, and the man ceases to exist; he is as if he never had been, and for his future life depends entirely on the resurrection. When this shall be accomplished, and the body re-organised and re-combined, the power of thought will re-appear; consciousness will resume her empire, and the man will find himself the same person that he was before his dissolution.

This doctrine appears to me equally repugnant to sound philosophy and the language of Scripture. To reject the distinc-

tion between soul and body, or mind and matter, is ultimately to reject the distinction between cause and effect, and thus to render all the appearances of nature inexplicable, and to plunge into atheism.

Two things pervade and constitute the whole of nature. One is known by this, that it is moved; the other by this, that it moves. The first is denominated matter, the last mind. Matter cannot move itself, and consequently cannot move any thing else. Wherever, therefore, we see matter in motion, we are sure that it is moved by something that is not matter. That something is mind. Now it is certain that all matter is in motion; consequently, wherever there is matter there is mind, or a self-active, immaterial principle, which produces and sustains motion. Wherever there is motion, the cause of it must be present; for a being cannot act where it does not exist. In addition to this elemental mind, or active, immaterial substance, man possesses intellect and spontaneous power, or volition. From these he derives his chief dignity and superiority over the other parts of creation. We are as sure of the existence of mind as of matter. When we reason, think, remember, or put forth any other internal act, we are as certain that we do so, as we are that we exist. We have no direct knowledge either of mind or matter. Both are known by their qualities or actions only. It is a law universally admitted, that similar effects or qualities should be referred to similar causes, and the contrary. A greater discrepancy cannot be conceived, than exists between the qualities of mind and those of matter. All the properties usually ascribed to matter may be reduced to one, and that is solidity. But solidity is resistance: were it not for this, we could not know that such a substance as matter were in existence. But we must remember, that resistance is action, and action is power; and power is a quality of the mind, or something that is not matter. Thus it would appear that what is called matter, when strictly scrutinized, loses its denomination, and becomes a quality. Mind therefore is the chief thing, and only agent, in the universe—the only real substance existing. In short, the material universe is merely a temporary modification of power, giving an outward exhibition or picture of the

invisible grandeur and majesty of God; and will, when his purposes are answered by it, revert to its immaterial, elementary source, "and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind." How absurd is it to talk of matter as the principal thing in nature, when indeed it is merely nature's dress! Mind, or soul, constitutes man. From this he derives all his dignity and worth. The body is a mere temporary vehicle, connecting man with the present world, and suited to answer his purposes here; but at death will be thrown aside, to be succeeded by a body spiritual and incorruptible.

On a subject of such high importance as the distinction on which I have insisted, God has not left us to the mere light of nature. No, thanks to his condescending goodness! he has given us "a more sure word of prophecy." To this let us now appeal. Through the Scriptures the distinction between soul and body is clearly asserted, and constantly referred to, as a fundamental truth. In the following words, Mat. x. 28, Christ commands his disciples not to fear men: "Fear them not which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." If these words do not fully imply that soul and body are distinct substances, and that the former is the principal part, for which we ought to be principally concerned, it is impossible for words to imply these truths. These words would be destitute of meaning, if man were wholly material. Though Christ repeatedly assured his disciples that he should rise from the dead, yet they understood him not. The words bringing the tidings of his resurrection, seemed to them "like idle tales." They were sure that Christ was dead; they had seen him expire on the cross; they had seen him laid in the tomb. After his resurrection, when his disciples were assembled, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith, Peace be unto you." They are petrified with astonishment, supposing "that they had seen a spirit." Mark the words of Christ: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Luke xxiv. 39. Stephen the proto-martyr, when stoned to death, cried out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts vii. 59. In 1 Cor. ii.

11, the apostle says, "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." John heard a voice from heaven saying, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." Rev. xiv. 13. The apostle Paul puts it beyond all doubt that the soul survives the dissolution of the body, and exists in a state of conscious activity and enjoyment. Thus he says to the Philippians, chap. i. 23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two: having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." And in 2 Cor. v. 8: "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." To the same purpose was the language of Christ to the thief crucified with him: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." At our Saviour's transfiguration, "there appeared Moses and Elias talking with him." This would have been impossible, if Moses and Elias had not been in existence in the spiritual world. Our Saviour repeated the words of God from Moses to prove that the dead will rise: "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." How do these words contain the doctrine of the resurrection? Our Saviour will inform us: "God," says he, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, therefore, are alive; and to make the words true in their full extent and meaning, these persons must again be united to their bodies: for these are objects of redemption as well as their souls. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is evidently built on the common opinion, entertained by the Jews, of the state of departed souls, and their different situations after this life. It is truly astonishing, that so many of the moderns, and some of them eminent for biblical knowledge, should have asserted, that the doctrine of a future life, and of the immortality of the soul, was not known to the patriarchs, prophets and righteous men of ancient times. The contrary is abundantly evident, both from the frequent allusions to this doctrine in the writings of the Old Testament, as well as in those of the New. Turn to the reasoning of Paul, as stated in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. He is describing the nature, the effects, and the object of faith. These he exemplifies in Abel, in

Enoch, and Noah; in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He particularly mentions Abraham, and says, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." What was this promise? Was it a city in the land of Canaan? Far otherwise. The apostle says, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." "Now they desire a better country; that is, an heavenly." The apostle proceeds, and mentions Joseph and Moses, Gideon and Samuel, and the prophets, and illustrates their faith by their hope of future reward. He mentions others who were tortured, not accepting deliverance. This, he says, they did, "that they might obtain a better resurrection." This great number of ancient worthies, he declares, all died in the faith, "not having received the promise." Thus it appears that the true worshippers of God, under the former dispensation, believed not only in the separate existence of the soul, but in the resurrection of the body.

If the doctrine of the separate existence of the soul be true, the dreary and comfortless doctrine of materialism, and temporary annihilation, must be false. Those who contend for the non-existence of the soul in a separate state often demand an example of one who has visited the unseen world, and returned to the earth. This, I presume, I shall be able to exhibit; and also to prove, by direct example from Scripture, the existence of disembodied spirits. For this purpose, permit me to call your attention to those words of St. Peter, as quoted from the Psalms, Acts ii. 27: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption."

The design of the apostle in these words is, to prove the resurrection of Christ. The words, as they are spoken, refer to David. The apostle, however, shews that they were not fulfilled in him: "for," says he, "he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." David personated Christ when he spake, "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that

his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." To render his reasoning conclusive, the apostle takes these words from writings which the Jews acknowledged to be of divine authority, and, instead of applying them to David, applied them to Christ. Of him he says, "that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." Now if the soul of Christ was not left in hell, it must certainly have been there. What are we to understand by this? I will endeavor to show you. The word used in the Greek version is *hades*. This signifies the invisible state, the receptacle of disembodied spirits, the general mansion into which all descended at death.* The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament for this state is *sheol*. Throughout the sacred Scriptures it is invariably used in this sense. Another word *keber*, used by the Hebrew writers, signifies the grave. These two words, the names of hell and the grave, are never confounded by the Hebrew writers. The first signifies the mansion of the departed spirit; the last the repository of the dead body. The Greek words, *hades* and *taphos*, exactly correspond to them, and are used as such by the writers of the New Testament. Unfortunately, in our translation these words are confounded, and promiscuously translated hell or grave. When the word hell is used, the first notion it presents to an English reader is, the place of torment, whereas it properly signifies no more than the invisible state, or hidden place. The word which properly signifies the place of torment is *Gehenna*, a word of Hebrew derivation. Thus, by an abuse of language, has error been produced and perpetuated. Now as *hades*, or hell, invariably signifies the mansion of departed souls, it is not difficult to understand that part of the apostle's creed which says, that Christ "descended into hell." This the ancient Hebrew writers describe as in the central parts of the earth; a vast repository, surrounded by an impassable wall, and fortified with huge gates of brass, and massive bars of iron, which our Saviour by his

* Those who wish to see this subject fully and learnedly discussed, I beg leave to refer to Dr. Horsely's Critical Notes on Hosea, page 257, &c., pages 200, 201; and page 46, note n; and also his sermon on Christ's Descent into Hell. Lond. edit. 1804.

power was to batter down, and cut in sunder. That part of the mansion to which the righteous descended, was called *Paradise*. This was not a state of penal confinement; but of unfinished bliss, of security and hope. Into this place men would never have entered, had it not been for sin. As the Saviour took on him the whole condition of humanity, it became necessary, as a part of his wonderful humiliation, that he should descend into the habitation of departed souls, that he might proclaim liberty to the captives, "and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." When did Christ descend into this invisible state called *hades*, or hell? Let his words to the repentant thief answer: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Into this habitation of disembodied spirits did the Saviour descend; not there to abide, for "his soul was not left in hell;" not there to preach repentance, for this had been given; but to proclaim his victory on the cross, —to announce that the great sacrifice of atonement had been offered; and to assure the "spirits in prison" that he was about to "ascend to his father and their father, to his God and their God." Having accomplished this part of his work, he returned on the third day, and assumed his body, so that "it saw no corruption." Now, that the Paradise to which Christ went after his crucifixion was not heaven, as it is commonly supposed, is evident from his words to Mary. As soon as she recognised her risen Lord, he said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." This subject will receive farther illustration from the following words in 1 Pet. iii. 18, &c. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Commentators have strangely perverted this text, and, for fear of purgatory, have given up a most important fact in the history of redemption. Lest they should countenance the exposition of the Romish doctors, they gravely assure us, in direct contradiction to the words of the text, that Christ, by his Spirit, went in the days of Noah and preached to the inhabitants of the former

world. The words imply no such meaning ; but plainly declare that Christ, after his death, went and preached : “ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit,” or, “ quick in spirit :” that is, alive in his soul, which survived the stroke under which his body fell : “ he went and preached to the spirits ;” not to men in the flesh : “ to the spirits in prison,” or safe-keeping. Who were these spirits ? The next words inform us : “ the spirits which sometime were disobedient.” This expression implies, that they had afterwards become obedient. “ They were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” But as it seems implied that they afterwards became obedient, it is reasonable to believe, that numbers, who had slighted the warnings of Noah, as soon as they beheld the signs of the approaching deluge—when they felt the earth trembling, and bursting under their feet—when they beheld the fountains of the great deep breaking up—the windows of heaven opened—the floods pouring down, and in their wide-wasting sweep burying all in ruin ;—repented, deeply repented, of their enormous sins, and found refuge in the mercy of God. Though “ the flood took them all away,” yet those who cried for pardon and repented, were accepted, and were secured in the habitation of the spirits of the just. That there were thousands of others in this subterranean repository, there can remain no doubt ; for this was the Paradise to which the patriarchs, prophets, and holy men of old, departed, and into which they entered after death. These all died in faith of the Messiah to come, not having received the promises ; but beheld them afar off, and were persuaded of them. The reasons, I conceive, why the disobedient in the days of Noah are exclusively mentioned, are these—that, as they were suddenly hurried off in such a tremendous catastrophe, they might still entertain fearful apprehensions of divine wrath. Succeeding ages might suppose, that the antediluvians had no part in the great redemption, because they experienced such severity from God. These apprehensions the apostle dissipates, by assuring us that Christ “ went and preached to the spirits in prison.” He there proclaimed the accomplishment of redemption ; announced the acceptable year of the Lord, and the opening of the prison

doors. "He delivered the prey from the mighty, and divided the spoil with the strong;" and thus became "Lord of the dead and living." "Now," says Paul, "that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Eph. iv. 9. This last expression is a periphrasis for hell, or the mansion of spirits. Christ, at his ascension, delivered these, and carried them all up in triumph to heaven. The apostle says expressly, "he ascended on high, leading captivity captive." It is abundantly evident from the Scriptures, that, since the ascension of Christ, all his followers, at death, ascend up where he is, at the right hand of God; and do not descend to the place called Paradise, where Christ conducted the repentant thief; where were in safe-keeping all who had died in faith of the Messiah to come. Christ at his ascension certainly went up into heaven; he prayed that where he was there his disciples might be, and behold his glory. "I," said Christ, "ascend unto my Father." "A little while, and ye shall not see me, because I go to the Father." "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Christ is represented at the day of judgment as coming from heaven with all his saints. In short, no fact is more plainly or frequently stated in the New Testament, than the residence of Christ in heavenly glory at his Father's right hand. At the day of judgment it is evident that none of the righteous are in *hades*: for John says, that death and *hades*, or hell, gave up the dead that were in them. These were certainly the wicked dead: for the next words assure us, "that death and *hades* were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death."

What a glorious view does the preceding statement exhibit of the great work of Christ! How clearly does it establish the separate existence of the soul! How completely does it destroy the dismal notion of a state of sleep between death and the resurrection! Christ said to his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." As the soul of Christ survived the dissolution of his body and continued in a state of conscious activity, so shall the soul of every believer. Christ is the captain of salvation, and the king of glory. As a conqueror from the cross, travelling in the

greatness of his strength, he bound in everlasting chains the power of darkness ; and, while he bade the prisoners go free, rising in all the majesty of his power, with his uplifted arm, smote the bastile of death, and crumbled it to atoms. Then did our great *Immanuel* triumph ! Then did he finish man's redemption ! Then, *O Death*, thou didst lose thy sting ! Then, *O Hell*, thou didst feel thine eternal wound !

The Saviour, having delivered the prisoners of hope, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord ; having returned and visited his church, " being seen of them forty days ;" having, through death, established his empire, and become " Lord of the dead and living ;" having collected the myriads of spirits in safe-keeping ; having accomplished his work on the earth, and " under the earth ;"—he ascended on high, leading captivity captive ; while adoring angels hailed his return to heaven : " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in ! Who is this King of glory ? The Lord strong and mighty : the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in ! Who is this King of glory ? The Lord of hosts : he is the King of glory."—As a returning conqueror, with all his captive and ransomed millions, he entered heaven's everlasting doors, while love ineffable beamed from his Father's face, and ten thousand hallelujahs, sent forth in loud harmony, rang through the eternal regions.

Thus I think it abundantly evident from the dictates of reason, and from Scriptural doctrine and Scriptural facts, that the soul survives the dissolution of the body. Here a question of the highest interest presents itself—In what state has the Christian reason to hope that he shall exist after the death of the body ? This brings me to the next part of my subject :

II. To show that Christians, at death, are received into heaven, where Christ their Lord is in his glorified body.

That there is a mansion called heaven, somewhere in the vast dominions of God, is clearly taught in the Scriptures. The apostle Paul calls it the third heaven. " I knew a man in Christ

caught up to the third heaven." This is the place in which God more immediately displays his glory to angels and the spirits of the just made perfect; the mansion, that "high and holy place," in which Christ resided before he came down to earth. Alluding to this, he says, John xvii. 5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And in chap. vi. 62, speaking to his disciples, he says, "What, and if ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before." "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." "In my father's house are many mansions." Paul says, "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." The "two men in white" who stood by the disciples at the ascension, said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The apostle Peter said to the Jews concerning Jesus, "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Acts iii. 21. Paul writing to the Hebrews, says, "Christ is not entered into the holy places, made with hands, but into heaven itself." Heb. ix. 24. He also says, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." In the scriptures the Church is spoken of as "The whole family in heaven and on earth;" as one extensive and united fraternity, as an organised and proportioned body, of which Christ is the head. Jerusalem which is above, is mother of all the children on earth. The righteous at death, therefore, are merely removed into an higher mansion of the vast palace of God. What a transporting view does the apostle Paul give of the great family under Christ and God, the judge of all. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven; and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant." John when in Patmos, had a view of the heavenly glory; he beheld the great Messiah throned in majesty; he saw the four living

creatures and the four and twenty elders casting their crowns of gold before the throne, singing a new song, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

There is unquestionably a local heaven, styled the habitation of God; where he manifests his glory; a mansion of delight, far remote from the sphere of fallen nature, beyond the utmost verge of matter, where eternal nature as it flows from God, reigns with all its elements bound in immoveable, everlasting harmony; where sin has never entered, and never will enter; there throned in glory, reigns, and forever will reign, the great Immanuel; there he sits arrayed in light; and from his high and holy place, looks down on his vast monarchy, and surveys innumerable worlds and systems rolling beneath his feet. There dwells the train of angels and archangels, clothed in glory. There stand and bow before the throne the palm bearing millions, "redeemed from every kindred, and tongue, and people." There stands the tree of life, bearing immortal fruit; and fast by the fount of God pours forth its chrysal waters. The light of the sun and the moon are lost in the everlasting light and glory of God.

Into this bright mansion, all who die in the Lord will be received. This is the place which Christ has gone to prepare for them. It is not without reason that they rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

I shall now proceed to the last particular proposed from the text.

III. I am to shew why Christians are always confident that they shall exist after death with Christ, and afterwards be fashioned like to his glorious body.

1. The confidence or faith of Christians, is founded in the testimony of God, and implies a full surrender of the intellect and heart to his authority. Hence faith becomes the medium of intercourse between the soul and things distant and unseen; it operates as a new sense, enlarging the sphere of reason; and by connecting the events of time with the retributions of eternity, substitutes more noble and efficacious principles of action;

and by imparting to the present, the powers of the world to come, points the destiny of man to an higher interest and a brighter crown. Faith looks not at the things "that are seen," for these are temporal; but "at the things which are unseen," for these are eternal. For all our knowledge of existence after the present life, we are wholly indebted to divine revelation. In this the promises are so plain and explicit, the declarations so direct and decisive, that we have reason to be always confident that "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;" that when we die, "we shall be present with him;" so that "whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thes. iv. 16. "Them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 20, 21.

God will most assuredly fulfil all his promises; "he will guide us with his counsel and afterward receive us to glory." The christian founds his hope of future happiness not on the promises alone; he can appeal to a source of evidence more direct and impressive, which pours light into his understanding; and powerfully impresses his heart. Christ, before his departure, promised to his disciples the advent and illumination of the Holy Ghost, the comforter, and declared that he should abide with them for ever, that he should bring all things to their remembrance, and lead them into all truth.

2. Hence another reason of the Christian's confidence, is the testimony of the Spirit. John says, "he that believeth in the Son, hath the witness in himself;" and the apostle says, "The spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."—The Holy Spirit, under the character of teacher, sanctifier and comforter, is the great agent in manifesting, applying, and rendering effectual, the redemption obtained by Christ. "If I go away, said Christ, I will send him unto you." "He shall not speak of himself, he shall testify of me, for he shall

receive of mine and show it unto you." By the things of Christ we are to understand his mediatorial work in all its branches ; his assumption of our nature ; his spotless birth ; his obedient and holy life ; his bitter sufferings and death ; his triumphant resurrection and ascension ; his session and intercession at the right hand of God. The teaching and doctrine of the Spirit of Truth may always be known by this, that they lead men directly to Christ, and induce them to build all their hopes of salvation on him. In the first establishment of Christianity, the Spirit bore testimony to the truths of the gospel, by miraculous gifts and powers. Men, on the surest ground, the evidence of their senses, embraced the great salvation ; "which," says Paul, "began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost." Heb. ii. 3, 4. The disciples of Christ were so blinded by their prejudices in favor of a temporal kingdom, that even after his resurrection, they addressed him thus : "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel." And he said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power ; but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts i. 6, 7. He also "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem ; but wait for the promise of the father, which," says he, "ye have heard of me."

Let us now see how this promise was fulfilled. Let us see in what manner the apostles received power from on high. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting ; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Acts i. 1, &c. The apostles were greatly agitated, and immediately addressed the multitudes in languages they had never learned. At this time, a grand anniversary festival of the Jewish nation, there "were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven." How great was their astonishment when they heard unlettered Galileans addressing them and

“speaking to them in their own tongue in which they were born the wonderful works of God.” The apostles now experienced the fulfilment of the promise concerning the Holy Ghost ; they now received power from on high ; they now entertained no doubt that Christ had risen and ascended to God. Such was their conviction, such was their confidence, that even Peter who had denied his Master, now boldly came forth and charged the Jews with murdering “the Prince of Life.” So cogent were his reasonings from their own prophets, that they “were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren what shall we do ?” Such was the force of truth ; such was the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that “the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” The Holy Ghost confirmed the doctrine of the apostles, not only by the gift of tongues, but by the power of healing diseases and raising the dead. Miracles are the best possible proofs of a religion, designed to be catholic or ecumenical. They are a direct appeal to the senses of men ; and can be judged of as well by the illiterate as the learned. Miracles are supernatural facts, so connected with the doctrines they are designed to confirm, that if you admit the former, you must admit the latter. If a teacher affirm that his doctrine is from God, and in attestation of it, can by a word heal the sick and raise the dead, we are obliged to acknowledge him a messenger from God ; for we know that it is impossible for God to lend an exertion of his power to support an impostor or propagate a falsehood. In the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles there could be no deception ; they were performed in open day, before thousands of spectators, in the full possession of their senses ; and for ends the most disinterested and important. After the establishment of Christianity, miracles were not necessary, and therefore ceased to be performed. To us, they now stand on record as other historical facts, and as such are to be used for the confirmation of our faith. The ordinary assistances of the Spirit, in sanctifying and illuminating, are granted to us, and to all Christians in all ages and nations ; and carry directly to our own consciousness, a degree and kind of evidence, which if we reject, we must reject all evidence whatever. “He that believ-

eth on the Son, hath the witness in himself." This is sufficient to authorize our confidence, that we shall live as Christ lives; that when he appears we shall appear with him in glory;—that he will change our vile body and make it like his most glorious body; and that with him we shall reign and triumph forever, in the kingdom of God.

III. Another reason why Christians are confident of future happiness, is the evidence they have of Christ's resurrection. This is a most important fact, for it involves the truth of the whole system of divine revelation. As the resurrection of Christ was a miracle of the highest kind, so it gave a most striking display of the power and interposition of God. Now if we admit that Christ was raised from the dead, we must admit that he was a true prophet; that all his doctrines were true, and that the writings of the ancient prophets, to which he often appealed, were divinely inspired.—Christ represented his resurrection and eternal life, as indissolubly connected with those of his followers. He is the head;—they are the members. His resurrection involves theirs: "Because I live, ye shall live also." "I am the resurrection and the life." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." "We shall be fashioned like to his glorious body." "The first Adam was made a living soul; the second a quickening spirit." "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

No fact recorded in ancient history comes to us so well authenticated, so fully established, as the resurrection of Christ. Of this we shall be convinced, whether we consider the number or competency of witnesses; the motives by which they were actuated; the sacrifices they made; the dangers they incurred; the sufferings they endured; the ardor and perseverance with which they laboured; or the success and triumph with which their efforts were crowned. Their conduct can be accounted for on no supposition, but a perfect conviction of the truth they announced. They renounced all the usual enjoyments, interests, pursuits and pleasures of life. These they willingly exchanged for toil, reproach, dishonor, poverty, persecution and

death ; and rejoiced in testifying their attachment to their risen Lord.

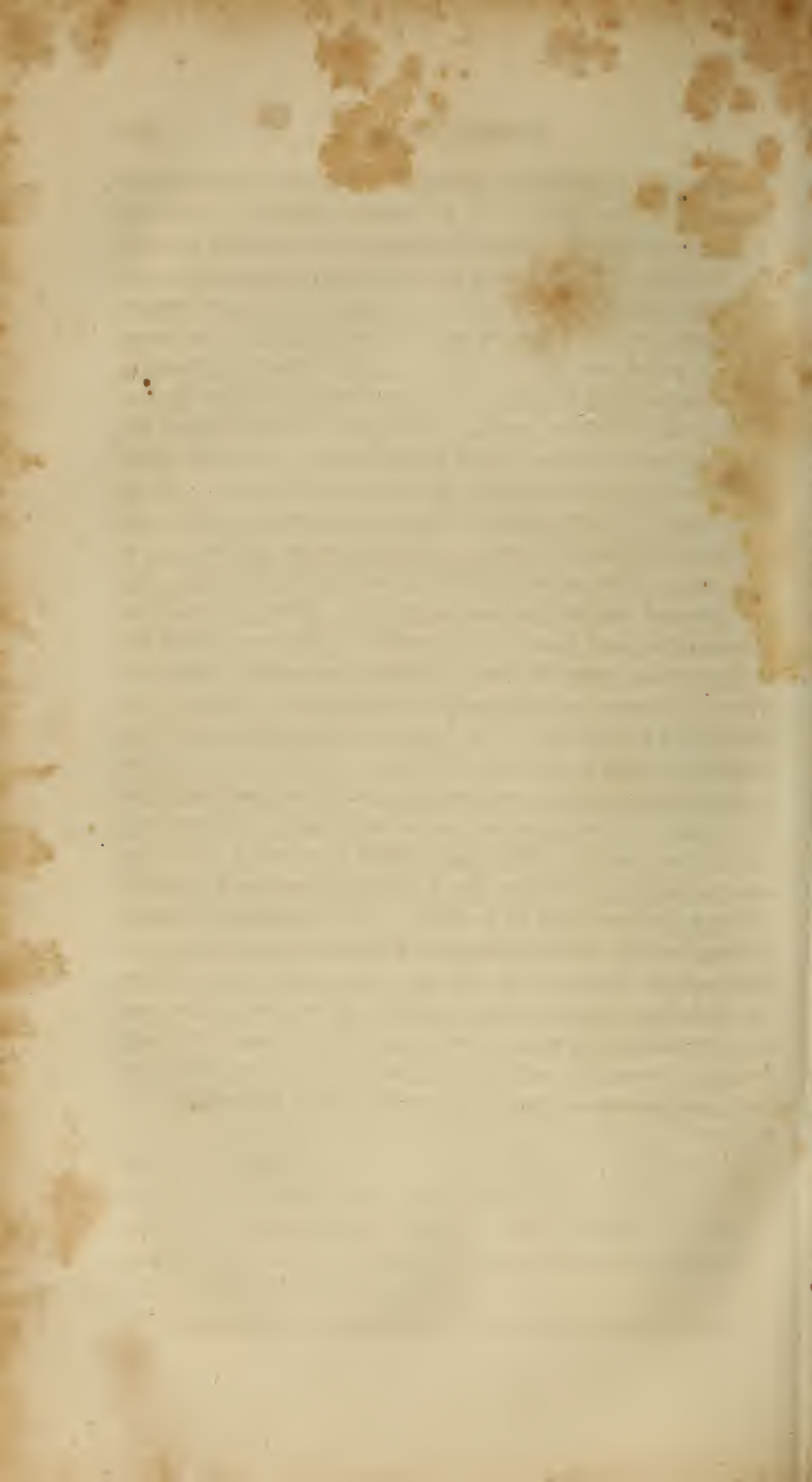
In the hands of a few unlettered, artless men, the Gospel every where triumphed. The Spirit of God bore testimony to the truth of their declarations, by the most stupendous miracles. The dead heard the voice of the Son of God, and awoke into life. The Gospel was indeed the power of God unto salvation. It subdued the proud, and enlightened the ignorant ; reformed the vicious, and restrained the profligate ; humbled the vain, and softened the obdurate ; prevailed against the united powers of philosophy and eloquence ; and with an energy which neither earth nor hell could resist, banished the pompous ceremonial of heathen worship, and prostrated the sceptre of the world at the foot of the cross. The great object of the apostolic ministry was to bear testimony to the resurrection of Christ. On this fact depended the fate of Christianity. The sudden and universal spread, therefore, of the gospel ; its powerful and salutary effects on the hearts and lives of men, at a period when the greatest efforts of human ability and learning had proved unavailing, are striking testimonies of its divine original, and such as ought to make us rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The manner in which the Evangelists have described the death and resurrection of Christ, impresses on the mind an irresistible conviction of honesty and truth. No dissimulation can be so perfect as to hide the deformity and jealousy of fraud and imposture. Examine the narratives of the Evangelists ; the manner in which they exhibit the conduct of the disciples and others at the resurrection ; imagine yourselves present, your own feelings will teach you ; they will speak a language which you cannot resist. Such is the language of the Evangelists. You cannot suspect them of deception. Why should they propagate a falsehood, when they could expect nothing from it, but injury, abuse, contempt and death ? The conduct and language of the disciples, on hearing that Christ had risen ; their doubts, fears and astonishment, when they beheld him ; when they saw the marks of the nails in his hands and feet, and of the spear in his side ; are incontestible proofs of the reality of the resurrection. If the disciples had been engaged in an imposture ; if by

a concurrence between them and Christ ; or from any other cause he had been taken down from the cross before he was really dead ; had been laid in the tomb ; and they had taken him away while the guard slept ; would they have betrayed any doubts of his resurrection when it was announced ? Would the reports of it have appeared to them like idle tales, so that they believed them not ? When the Saviour appeared to them at Jerusalem, would they have been petrified as they were with astonishment and fear, so that they could not credit their senses ? “ Why are ye troubled,” said Christ, “ and why do thoughts arise in your minds ? Behold my hands.” When the disciples could no longer resist the evidence of their eyes and hands ; we are told that their joy was so great, that they could not believe, and that they wondered. What a picture is this of the workings of nature on such an occasion ! If the disciples were engaged in a conspiracy to make the resurrection be believed, when it was not true, how happened it that they themselves were so slow to believe ? When Christ was laid in the tomb, the disciples gave up his cause in despair ; for they did not know the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. God kept them in ignorance, that the truth might appear more conspicuous. The soldiers declared that the disciples had stolen him away while they slept. How could they know what was done when they were asleep ? Such is the refuge of falsehood. Of what use could the body be to the disciples except to embalm it ? And had they done this, this very circumstance would have proved Christ an impostor and false prophet, because he had before declared that he should rise on the third day. The circumstance that preparation was made for embalming the body, is a full proof that the disciples knew not that he should rise again. All the proofs of Christ’s resurrection, are proofs of his divine mission, and of the resurrection of all his followers. Thus whether the Christian considers the evidence of faith, of testimony, of the witness of the Spirit, or the proofs of Christ’s resurrection, he has sufficient reason for his confidence as to the separate existence of the soul ; its future union with the body, and the endless felicity of both in heaven.

Permit me, now, to close this service with a short address to

the honorable Legislature. During the last year, our state in general, has been visited with an unusual degree of mortality. The sighs of the widow and the orphan, have ascended to heaven. A large portion of your associates, have been called into the eternal world. By assembling to pay a tribute of respect to departed worth ; and with humility and resignation, to recognize the awful visitation of Heaven, you evince a becoming sympathy with the afflicted, and set an example, worthy the Legislators of a Christian people. Permit me, to remind you of the distinguishing goodness of God, in sparing you. Consider these recent instances of mortality, as the voice of God. "Be ye also ready." Every moment brings you nearer the grave and the awful tribunal of Jehovah. Probably before another year is past, many in this assembly will be sleeping in the dust. Are you prepared for that tremendous moment, when you must bid adieu to time, and launch into eternity ? Turn not a deaf ear to the warning voice of God. Cherish the solemn reflections which the present occasion presses on your minds, and fly to the refuge God has provided. He has done every thing that it was proper he should do for your salvation. His Son has died for you to expiate your sins, and has removed all external obstacles. The calls of his grace are free and indiscriminate, "Whosoever will let him come."—"Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found ; call ye upon him while he is near." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." By embracing the gospel, you will find a remedy for every evil, a balm for every wound. You will be prepared to meet your Saviour and your God ; and possess a hope full of ardour, full of immortality.



A
FUNERAL SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MR. JOHN SAMPSON BOBO,

A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR CLASS, IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA
COLLEGE,

WHO WAS UNFORTUNATELY DROWNED IN THE CONGAREE RIVER NEAR COLUMBIA.

DELIVERED IN THE

COLLEGE CHAPEL, ON LORD'S DAY,

OCTOBER 10, 1819.



A FUNERAL SERMON.

"THOU HAST APPOINTED HIS BOUNDS THAT HE CANNOT PASS."—JOB xiv. 5.

THE repeated instances of mortality, with which we have been visited, while they call forth our sympathy, fill us with a profound sense of the mysterious sovereignty and supreme dominion of God. Though he clothes himself in darkness, yet he executes his judgments in righteousness. His path is in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known. His warning voice summons us to the tomb, and to the bar of eternal judgment. Let us remember that we too must die. Let us not deceive ourselves by imagining, that youth, or health, or strength; that virtue or learning, or mature age, can, one moment, secure us, against the arrest of death. Let your own experience impress this solemn truth on your hearts. Call to mind your late fellow student who now sleeps in dust. You saw him like yourselves in all the gaiety, sprightliness and bloom of youth; you saw him fall like the morning flower that bows its head in death. O consider that distinguishing goodness, that has spared you; remember your creator now in the days of your youth, and devote yourselves to him in a constant preparation for a future world. You know not how soon, or how suddenly you may be called to descend into the gloomy valley. Perhaps you are now treading at the horizon of time, just ready to step into eternity. If you would be prepared for this solemn event; if

you would leave the world with a hope full of immortality ; submit yourselves to the Son of God ; embrace his gospel ; obey his commands ; he has promised eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." "Our bodies shall then be fashioned like to his glorious body."

In affliction and distress, it is a difficult task to bend our minds to that submissive resignation, which a just view of God's character and government, dictates and religion enjoins. God is in all things to be viewed as the supreme and independent governor of all worlds ; as infinitely wise and good in all his dispensations. With an impartial stroke he lays the monarch and the slave in the dust. Evil to an enormous extent and degree has prevailed and defaced the workmanship of God. Sin, the cause of all this ruin, has carried sorrow to the heart of every son and daughter of Adam.—"It is appointed unto men once to die." This sentence from the lip of eternal truth none can evade. Thus says Job, in the language of our text, "Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."

In all the afflictions which God is pleased to lay upon us, it is our duty to submit with humble and silent resignation. His language is, "Be still, and know that I am God !" In the instances of mortality which are multiplying around us, he teaches us the vanity of the world, extreme fragility of life ; and the precarious tenure of all sublunary enjoyments. We are indeed the heirs of pain, disease and death. God has not left us without hope ; for "he hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." Here is a firm foundation for our hopes in life, in death and in eternity.

Men have entertained various and opposite opinions concerning death. Some have considered it as the termination of existence, others as a removal from the present to a more happy or miserable state. Some have believed death to be the destruction of all sin, the oblivion of all sorrow, and the commencement of immortal beatitude. A few have believed death to be the suspension of existence till the resurrection. The opinions of men concerning this important subject are at best but

doubtful conjecture. They afford no relief to that anxiety which agitates the heart in a near prospect of dissolution. We tremble at that period which must lodge us in the gloomy mansion of death. A consciousness that our souls will survive our bodies ; the ignorance and uncertainty in which we are involved as to the nature of our destiny ; are the principal causes of our irreconciliation to our fate. But were the consequences of dissolution fully unfolded, is it not highly probable that our situation would be less eligible and more exposed to inquietude ? Is it not reasonable to suppose that our blindness to the future is kindly given ? May we not reasonably believe that God has disclosed as much of futurity as is conducive to our good and consistent with our nature as rational accountable creatures ? Is it not probable that a full display of the just punishment of sin, would so far overpower and suspend the faculties of impenitent transgressors as to render them incapable of moral government ? Is it not probable that a full display of the rewards of virtue, and the joys of heaven, would so highly exalt the expectations and desires of the righteous, as to render them unfit for the present world ? God has undoubtedly revealed as much as it was consistent with wisdom and goodness to reveal. The scriptures uniformly connect misery with vice, and happiness with virtue. They clearly portray and define those qualifications which are essential to the possession and enjoyment of true felicity. Those whose hearts respond to the voice of inspiration, enjoy a high assurance, not of perpetual existence, but of perpetual happiness. The idea that death destroys our existence, is repugnant to reason and revelation. In the latter a constant distinction is made between body and spirit. God is styled "the God of the spirits of all flesh," Num. xxvii. 16. Paul speaks of the spirits of the just made perfect ; Heb. xii. 23 ; and of the spirits in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 9. Job says, "there is a spirit in man." David says, "into thy hand I commit my spirit." Christ said to his disciples, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones." Stephen, when stoned to death, as he gave up the ghost, cried, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Paul speaks of being absent from the body and present with the Lord. From these expressions it is evident that the separate existence of the soul is taught in the scrip-

tures. Death therefore, ought to be considered as only a change in the manner of our existence ; a change to which we are all liable, and, which we must sooner or later experience. For "it is appointed unto man once to die." From this and various other passages in the scriptures, it appears that men are subjected to death, by a divine constitution. It does not appear that man was ever intended for an immortal existence in this world. Such an existence here, however it might at first appear to gratify our wishes, would undoubtedly be inconsistent with our happiness and the benevolence of the Deity. I propose therefore from the words of the text,

I. First, to illustrate the general truth asserted in them. "The appointment of men unto death.

II. Secondly, to shew that this appointment is wise, just and good.

I shall then finish the subject with a few observations.

I. I am first to illustrate the assertion in the text, "The appointment of men unto death."

Man is a progressive changeable being. Though his existence is commensurate in duration with that of deity, yet it passes through a variety of states, and is subjected to great vicissitudes. Of all these the human birth, death and resurrection, are the most important. These three changes, considered in connexion with all their consequences, present the scene of man's existence in a rational and splendid point of light. We are apt to entertain unfavorable conceptions of some particular arrangements and providences of God, merely because we view them detached from the great scene of his administration. But if we survey all his ways and works in connection, we shall rest satisfied, that they are marked with the highest wisdom and goodness. The subjection of man to mortality, is an allotment of heaven. God's great plan in the government of the universe is fixed and immutable. In him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. "Known unto him are all things from the beginning." God

has fixed a plan of government for all material nature. This government extends to every movement, change and variety in creation, and is carried on by irresistible force. God has also established a plan of government for rational creatures. This extends to all their states, motives, views and actions, and is carried on by laws, enforced by the prospect of punishments and rewards. Both these kinds of government respect man. The first respects him as a mere material being, the second as a rational being. In the establishment of the first scheme of government, God expressed in man's constitution, the appointment of mortality. It seems scarcely to have been a question with the ancient philosophers, why men should die. To them it was no great wonder that bodies composed of earthly, perishable materials, governed by the laws of matter, should fall in with the general current of things, and verge to dissolution. It would have been a much greater wonder, had these bodies been preserved in perpetual youth and vigor; superior to the ravages of time, neither tired by exercise, nor enfeebled by disease. Though the laws of our constitution are such, that it cannot avoid decay, yet we must not have recourse to those laws alone, when we would explore the first cause of our subjection to mortality. These laws must be considered as the index to point us up to the intention of him who established them. All regular laws for the action of bodies must have been established by some intelligent agent. The uniform tendency and final result of those laws, must be considered, as the will of that agent. Our bodies simply considered in themselves are mere machines. They are kept in motion by regular laws, and like all other machines, wear out by motion. God therefore, has in the constitution of our nature clearly and unequivocally expressed his will respecting our mortality. We carry in our very constitution the appointment and sentence of death.

2. To this testimony of reason, let us add that of experience. The universal dissolution of the human race in all ages and nations, is an expression in God's providence, which fully corresponds with the constitution of nature. This expression is God's will and appointment brought into effect. None of the human race have ever been able to avoid the ravage of time or the arrest

of death. Those numerous nations which have successively spread over the earth, are all fallen into the dust and lodged in silence. Those heroes who once guided the storm of battle; those monarchs who wielded the sceptre of empire, who devoted thousands to death, have themselves become his prey. Their dust is now mingled with that of their slaves, and all their splendor and pageantry are lodged under the clods of the valley. As much of time as has elapsed, so much of the truth appears, that it is appointed unto men once to die.

3. To reason and experience, let us add the testimony of scripture. Here all doubts concerning the divine appointment of death are fully removed. Man at his first creation was placed in the delightful garden of Eden. His soul was clothed with innocence, his powers corporeal and mental, were unimpaired, and his soul walked forth in all her primeval majesty. The tree of life, held forth its fruit to heal all the disorders to which he was liable, and to perpetuate his constitution in health and vigor. Of the tree of good and evil, he was forbidden to eat on pain of death. He disobeyed his God, and not only forfeited his title to the tree of life, but subjected himself to death. For the language of God to him was, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Thus death appears to have been introduced by the sin of the first man. This corresponds with the account given of it by Paul. He declares that it was "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sined." Rom. v. 12. He also says, "that by one man's offence, death reigned." That "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Hence it appears that death entered by Adam's transgression, and passed upon all mankind through him, as their federal head. For it is clear from the scriptures that men are not subjected to death for their own personal sins. "Death," says Paul, "reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam sinned against a positive law, whose express penalty was death. From him to Moses, there was no law existing, which threatened death to the transgressor. Yet men died during this period. This shows that they did not die for their own sin. For, says

Paul, "sin is not imputed where there is no law." This idea will receive a further illustration from considering that infants who certainly are not guilty of personal sin, are subjected to death. Death therefore came by divine constitution and appointment. Thus says Job, "His days are determined, the number of his months is with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." "They shall all lie down in the dust together." Expressions of this nature, pointing out the universal reign of death over all mankind, are too numerous to be mentioned. It is the voice of God and the law of nature that men must die. To this law there are some apparent exceptions. Enoch and Elias were translated alive to heaven. Though they were exempted from the pangs of dissolution, yet they undoubtedly underwent a change equal to death and resurrection. Because, without it they could not have been admitted into heaven. For Paul says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." These two persons were suddenly snatched into incorruptibility. A change passed upon them similar to that mentioned by Paul to the Corinthians, "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Thus it appears from the constitution of man, from experience and scripture, that it is appointed unto men once to die. Some have supposed that the appointment of men unto death in consequence of the sin of the first man, is hard, that it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God.

II. I proceed then in the second place to demonstrate that this appointment is wise, just and good.

1. The injustice charged on divine providence in subjecting all men to death, through the offence of one, is frequently urged from the consideration of their unconsciousness and inactivity in his transgression. This supposes that, if all men had by their personal suffrages, appointed Adam as their federal head, they ought, in justice to acquiesce in the penalty incurred by his disobedience. But may we not be allowed to ask

whether it is not reasonable to believe, that God would make a wiser and better choice than men would? Is it not reasonable to suppose that in an affair of so much importance, when the supernatural immortality of the whole human race was depending on the conduct of an individual, that all men would instantly prefer that God should determine on that individual, than that men should do it? Would not their chance for continual existence in this case be much greater, than if men who are imperfect and fallible should themselves make the choice? The consideration of God's making the choice, ought rather to compose and satisfy us than disturb and render us uneasy.

2. The opposition to the justice of our subjection to death for the offence of Adam, rests on the supposition that man has an original right to immortal life in this world. By an original right we understand that which is founded in the nature of things. Thus a spirit from its constitution is immortal. It is created under an incapacity of dissolution. Immortality is wrought into its constitution, and is therefore its natural right. To deprive a whole race of beings of such a right for the sin of one would be cruel and unjust. But immortality was never the natural right of human nature. A body formed of perishable, mutable materials, unless constantly supported by some supernatural gift or assistance, must decay. Such was the body of the human nature. It had no right to immortality except by the supernatural unmerited bounty of heaven. God gave Adam access to the tree of life. He had a right to give it on what conditions he pleased, and to take the forfeiture when he saw fit. Man on the principles of his constitution; had he remained in innocence, could claim no right to exemption from death. God had provided the tree of life as a preservative against mortality. No one can doubt that God might justly exclude Adam from Paradise, if he disobeyed his commands. His expulsion from Paradise took nothing from him to which he had a right. It only left him to those laws of mortality to which all earthly animated bodies are subject. Children must of necessity follow the condition of the parents. We lost nothing in the first man to which he had any right, and therefore have no reason to complain. God has done us no injury. He created us in a mortal

state. Immortality to us, was a supernatural favor, to withdraw it on a reasonable provocation was neither cruel nor unjust.

3. An endless life in this world on the present constitution of nature is neither possible nor desirable. It is not possible, because sin has opened the doors of wrath in man, and let out those violent boisterous passions, which excite him to the destruction of his own species. Without a constant miracle therefore life cannot be endless while men are sinful. Neither is immortality in this world desirable. A few years here are enough for the wise and virtuous, though they are not oppressed with any remarkable calamities. Nothing in this world satisfies. So long as we remain in this situation, we are restless and uneasy. Were we destined to live forever here, there would be an end to improvement. No succeeding generation would improve on the acquisitions of the former. Those far advanced in years would be so entirely under the power of habit, so attached to their own opinions, and possessed of so much influence, that they would overawe all spirit of enterprise and innovation. The whole world would stagnate, and life become as insipid in enjoyment, as it would be long in duration. The poor, distressed and persecuted, would find no relief. The duration of life to them would be the duration of misery. Were we exempt from mortality in the present sinful state, how would the world be governed? What barrier could be raised to oppose the accumulated ambition, rapacity and power of a thousand ages, all centered in an individual? What but death could stop the career of wickedness, and the multiplication of human calamities. The state of the present world is such, that neither virtue can be rewarded here nor vice punished. That then must be a wise ordination which removes the virtuous to a place of rewards, and the vicious to a place of punishment. We have therefore reason to believe that the appointment of death is wise and good.

4. In this respect, we shall be still more sensible of the divine goodness, if we consider, that before God subjected man to death, he promised its destruction. Addressing the adversary, who had beguiled Eve, he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The seed

here promised was Christ, who took our nature, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them, who through fear of it, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." When sin had been introduced, immortal happiness in this world had become impossible. Could it then be considered as a want of goodness to subject us to a change, that should render us perfect and glorious, capable of endless felicity? All the virtuous and good at death, depart to be with Christ. This, says Paul, is "far better." For the righteous shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their father. God, though he has sentenced us to death, has exposed to our attainment a state of greater happiness, than we should ever have enjoyed had we lived in eternal innocence in this world. Though the dispensation of death considered in itself appears gloomy, and strikes us with terror, yet viewed in its proper connexions and consequences, it appears wise and good.

I shall now conclude this subject with a few observations.

I. From the preceding discourse, it appears to be the law of nature, and the voice of God, that men must die. A necessity is laid upon us, and we cannot escape. Yet we flatter ourselves that death is at a great distance. We are unwilling to contemplate his approach, and to exchange the gay and busy scenes of life for the mansions of darkness and silence. But we ought to consider that our destiny is fixed by divine appointment. This consideration we should improve, by preparing ourselves for death. This awful subject ought frequently and seriously to engross our attention. It will assist us in the government of our lives, and afford a perpetual antidote against the allurements and vanities of the world. The time of our dissolution to us is utterly uncertain and unknown. Our Lord may come in such a day and hour as we think not of it. How then ought our attention to be excited, that we may be prepared for that solemn occasion, when we must exchange worlds! We are already walking on the shore of that vast ocean, on which we must soon sail, and from which we shall never return. How then does it become us to repent of our sins, and to receive the gospel of the Son of God! These are the only rational preparatives for heaven. Let us not put off the important business of religion, lest

by refusing her as our companion in life, we be left destitute of her support in death.

II. I observe in the second place, that the consideration, that death is appointed in wisdom and goodness, may afford us support and consolation in adversity. Though death dissolves the tenderest ties, and awakens all the keenest sensibilities of nature, yet the idea that God has ordained it, not as the destruction, but improvement of our existence, must alleviate our sorrow and induce us to wait with patient resignation the moment when we ourselves must bid adieu to earth and all its joys. God for our consolation has assured us that Christ has disarmed the king of terrors and unbarred the gates of Paradise. Let us not then repine that we must fall into the dust, for if we believe in Christ, we shall rise more glorious. Though we are sown in dishonor, yet we shall be raised in glory; though we are sown in weakness, yet we shall be raised in power. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption; this mortal must put on immortality; and death shall be swallowed up of life." Our near and virtuous friends will rise with us clothed with immortal spiritual bodies; bright as the angels of God; exulting in undecaying youth, and with us will join in the songs of heaven through the wasteless ages of eternity. No disappointment will then disturb us; no separation will fill us with anguish. God himself will wipe all tears from every eye, and dwell in every heart. Let us then with patience, run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith; unto Jesus the great exemplar of our future, risen bodies; the great captain of our salvation, whose death and resurrection inscribed victory on the tomb, and destruction of hell. In all our distresses and sorrows, let us confide in God, believing that "our present light affliction," will work for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In the days of adversity, when the clouds thicken around us, we are apt to despond, and to distrust the goodness of our heavenly father. From our present feelings we deduce the most unfavorable conclusions. Engrossed by our sufferings; weighed down by affliction and trouble, we are apt to indulge an impatient temper, and to repine under the chastising hand of heaven.

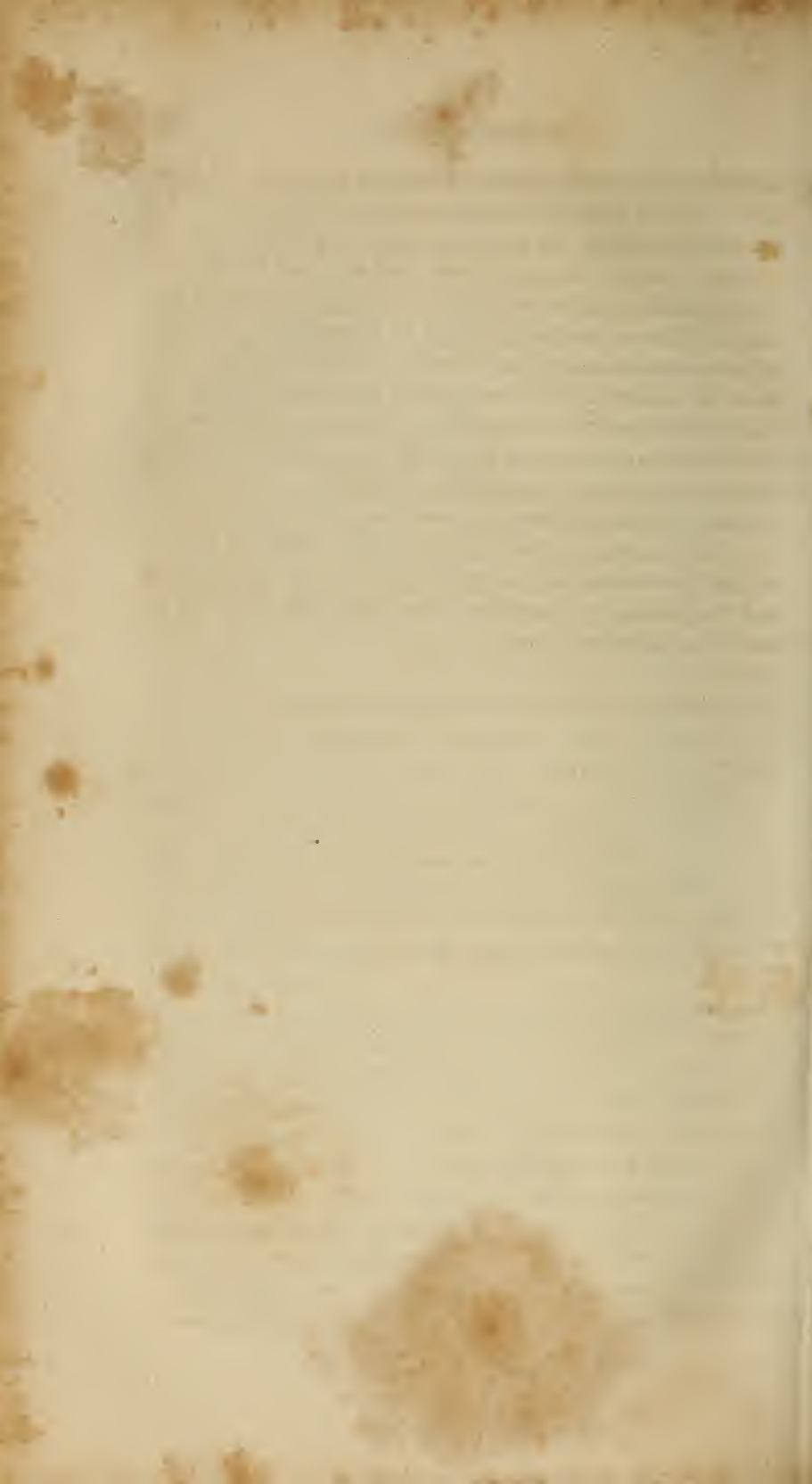
We ought to consider that "God does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men;" that he corrects us for our benefit; that in the end, we can say "it is good for us that we have been in trouble."

God, in the late solemn visitations of his providence, has given a loud warning to all, especially to the younger members of this Institution. The alarming admonition breaks upon our ears, "Be ye also ready!" Prepare to meet your God! Remember that your lives are in the hand of God: and though in his great goodness he still spares you; yet in an unexpected moment, he may prostrate all your towering hopes, and overwhelm you in an untimely grave! "Man in his best estate is altogether vanity," his life, a fading flower, a fleeting shadow!

Reflect on your late fellow student, who not long since, like yourselves, was exulting in the morning of his days; arrayed in the splendor of youth; and pressing forward with all the ardor of hope, in the career of honorable fame. How changed the scene! Suddenly arrested; torn from his weeping parents and friends, he moulders in the house of dust! There must he rest till the archangel's trump shall call into life the sleeping millions. "Man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep!" While this afflictive dispensation calls forth all your sympathy; let it teach you the extreme uncertainty and frailty of life. Trust not in youth; trust not in your health and strength; these can afford you no security. How does this recent example enforce this solemn truth!

Reflect, I beseech you, on the goodness and forbearance of God. Enquire of yourselves, "why am I spared?" Why did not God demand my life, consign my body to the grave, and call my soul to his tremendous bar? Was I prepared? Was I ready to leave the world and to be ushered into eternity? Remember, another day! And you may be called to descend into the gloomy valley. If you neglect the calls and warnings of God; how can you expect to escape his righteous indignation? How can you ever attend to the concerns of a future world; if you neglect them now? Everything is in your favor; youth, health, strength, leisure, the means of discipline and instruction. Now

indeed is with you the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. God has given abundant assurance of his mercy. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Embrace the mercy of God as presented in the gospel, and submit yourselves to the counsels of divine wisdom. Submit to the sceptre of divine mercy, and build your hopes on him who is the resurrection and the life. Then you may be assured that God hath given eternal life in his son; and hath begotten you to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. You will then possess a hope full of immortality; a hope that entereth into that within the vail; where the forerunner has for us entered; and when the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved and pass away; you will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of God.



A
S E R M O N
DELIVERED IN THE
CHAPEL OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
TO THE
S E N I O R C L A S S,
ON THE SUNDAY PRECEDING THE
ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1800.



A SERMON.

"HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF, SHALL BE EXALTED."—LUKE xiv. 11.

THESE words point out the direct road to preferment. They exhibit that conduct which is honorary to man and acceptable to God. However mortifying it may be to our pride to form a just estimate of ourselves, and to practice the meek, unassuming virtue, humility; however despicable we may appear in the view of the world, for denying ourselves and complying with the injunctions of our divine Saviour; yet these are the only things which will secure true dignity and permanent happiness. We ought to remember, that infinite wisdom, comprehends at one view, the origin, motives, progress, effects and final issue of all our actions. God's ways are as much above ours as the heavens are above the earth. We are limited in our capacity and in our own exertions. We are liable to forget the past, and we cannot penetrate the future. Hence we cannot take in, at once, the whole train of action, which God has ordained to prepare us for happiness. His directions are designed to coincide with the whole science, and the great end of our existence. Hence we are liable to form unfavorable and imperfect conceptions concerning many of God's injunctions and operations, merely because we view them detached from the great plan of his administration. In the scripture, many dispositions are in-

culcated, to which we are naturally averse, and many are censured to which we are naturally attached. We are apt to suppose that exalted, ambitious views, and a correspondent conduct will promote our prosperity and happiness. Our pride leads us to measure the greatest achievements by our own powers. Though we are limited in the intellectual as well as in the natural world, yet we do not rest satisfied with the bounds prescribed by our beneficent creator. We sigh to explore the hidden causes of things, their intimate constitutions, and their final destination. We sigh to wield a world, as we do an atom, to search the center of the earth, and to sail among the stars. Experiment destroys our vain imaginations. We fall back into our proper selves, and feel the necessity of some superior power and wisdom to direct, control, and limit our exertions. How vain is it for man to presume on the perfection of his own powers, and to indulge an exulting confidence in himself! He is sure to meet with disgrace and degradation. He who knew the hearts of men said, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." Our Saviour when on earth embraced every favorable opportunity, to inculcate those lessons of wisdom, which were calculated to exterminate the pride and self-confidence of men. From the most ordinary occurrences he deduced the most weighty instructions. When in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, observing that they that were bidden chose out the chief rooms, he said, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden; and he that bade thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room; but when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher, then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." He then added, as the sum of his instructions on that occasion, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." My design is to show, from a few considerations, the connexion between humility and preferment.

I. Humility implies a just and proper estimate of ourselves.

Such is our situation in the present world that it is of the greatest importance to us in all our concernments, to proportion our enterprises and our exertions to our ability. If we fail in this respect we shall, in all affairs of magnitude, involve ourselves, and probably others, in disgrace or ruin. Hence appears the necessity of acquiring as accurate a knowledge of ourselves, as circumstances will permit, previous to our entrance on the active businesses of life. We must lay aside our prejudices; all partiality for our own talents and acquirements; we must disclose all our infirmities to a strict scrutiny; we must retire from ourselves, and become objects of our own contemplation and judgment. This indeed is a difficult task; but still it is necessary to be performed, if we would feel ourselves in the station assigned to us by our maker. We must consider our corporeal and mental powers; we must enquire to what objects and pursuits they are adapted. Our intellect, memory, imagination, our power of volition, our passions, our propensities, our affections and aversions; our moral qualities and improvements; our situation and prospects; our means and resources; our connexions in social and civil life; and above all our relation to God; all these must be attentively considered by those who would acquire a just knowledge of themselves; so as to preserve that mild equanimity which is below pride and above meanness. A comprehensive and unprejudiced survey of ourselves, by showing us our numerous imperfections, our limited capacity and sphere of action, will convince us that we have little reason for indulging exalted thoughts of ourselves and of our greatest exertions. When we compare the extensiveness of God's works with the narrowness of our own powers; when we consider how soon we are baffled in explaining the causes of the most common appearances, and when we consider that, in almost all our conduct, we are obliged to proceed upon mere probability, and that there is scarcely any thing except mathematical demonstration in which we can arrive at absolute certainty, we are surprized that we should ever have thought so highly of ourselves; and instead of arrogantly boasting of our superiority, we are disposed to bow down at the feet of omnipotence and adore him for that

small portion of intelligence with which he has been pleased to endow us. When we have inquired and ascertained what things are knowable and practicable, we shall naturally form a just judgment of the extent of that sphere in which we were destined to act. We shall rest satisfied with the station allotted us by Providence, without vexing ourselves in the pursuit of objects beyond our reach, and consuming in unprofitable reveries, that portion of time which should be devoted to the important duties of life. By reducing ourselves down to our proper size, and confining our exertions to things attainable by us, we shall coincide with the laws of nature, and succeed in our enterprises. There can remain little doubt of success; because the means we employ will be proportioned to the end we pursue. The only art and address necessary, will be the proper management of our resources. This, men of ordinary abilities may easily obtain by observation and experience. The amiable virtue, humility, is, in its nature, calculated to keep us duly mindful of our deficiencies and imperfections, so as to rouse all our powers into a steady and proper train of action. On the contrary, a high opinion of ourselves will render us blind to our defects; and of course, will lull us into a confident indolence, or engage us in schemes of destructive ambition. The conduct which flows from genuine humility is attractive and engaging. It never fails to secure the good-will of all our acquaintances. Of how much importance this to our prosperity and preferment, those can easily determine who are but moderately conversant in the affairs of life. The way for men to excel and prosper, is not to indulge an assuming confidence in their own powers, and to believe their exertions adequate to the greatest achievements. An high estimate of ourselves, though it may gratify our vanity will neither confer merit, nor ensure success.—The pine whose top brushes the clouds, yields to the blast, and falls with a most tremendous ruin. An haughty spirit, a supreme confidence in ourselves, is a sure indication of folly, and presage of degradation. If we would secure our true dignity and honor we must possess and practise humility. For it is undoubtedly true, as our Saviour asserted, that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted.

II. Humility implies a disposition to prefer others, and to promote their prosperity.

That lowliness of mind inculcated in the scriptures appears to be inseparably connected with genuine benevolence. This seeks the happiness of others in obedience to the will of God, and in subserviency to the general good of the created system. He who considers how small a part he constitutes of the great works of God, and who has just views of himself, as a fallen sinful creature, is not disposed to exalt himself on the ruins of others or to say, stand by thyself, I am holier than thou. With the penitent publican he smites on his breast, and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He now possesses a proper temper of mind to comply with the apostle's direction, "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." John the Baptist, when he contemplated the superior gifts and successes of the Saviour, humbly said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The disposition and conduct implied in true humility, is calculated to prevent the effects of envy and to conciliate esteem. He who thinks more highly of himself, than others think of him, is sure to excite disgust and opposition. For men generally bear with impatience that superiority of merit which is real, whether it is gained by laborious, personal exertion, or inherited from the bounty of God. An indignant disgust rises against him whose pretensions to eminence and distinction are founded in vanity and self-conceit. Even where the possessor of real merit allows himself to appear sensible of it, and to value himself upon it, he at once becomes obnoxious. True merit carries its own light and its own glory with it. It needs not the varnish of affectation nor the officiousness of self-love. Unassuming diffidence, is its characteristic and recommendation. We are so constituted that we feel a peculiar pleasure in assisting and promoting those who seem diffident of their abilities, and unconscious of their real worth. We possess an anxiety lest they should not be sufficiently noticed, approved, and promoted. Those who have the greatest merit, have the clearest views of their defects. This arises from that high sensibility and nice discernment which always exist in great and virtuous minds. These have enlarged views of things; and of

course perceive difficulties and embarrassments unknown to those whose mental powers are less energetic ; whose confidence arises from ignorance, and whose highest merit is an unblushing assurance. It is to be lamented that with so great a portion of mankind, impudence will supply the place of worth. It is doubtless from observing this, that many from motives of vanity and self-conceit, from indolence or impatience, have neglected to gain those acquirements which were within the compass of their abilities, and have rendered themselves contemptible by their officious intrusion on the public. Against errors of this kind humility is a sufficient guard. While it keeps the possessor in his proper province, it disposes him to obtain those qualifications which alone can clothe him with true dignity, and facilitate his promotion. He is disposed to esteem others better than himself and to seek their prosperity. In this way his whole train of conduct confers obligations on others, and disposes them to promote his interest. Thus he who humbles himself pursues the most direct method to exaltation.—If we perform acts wholly selfish they result from pride, and most probably will injure others as well as ourselves. Benevolent acts we cannot perform without benefiting ourselves and others. Hence as humility always disposes to benevolence, and is inseparable from it, it necessarily promotes our own good.

III. Humility implies a disposition to receive instruction and admonition.

The first of these refers to the improvement of the understanding ; the second to the correction of our conduct. Both are therefore of the highest importance as to usefulness and respectability in the world. Pride is one of the greatest obstacles to mental improvement. It flatters its possessor that his powers are sufficiently energetic, and his present acquirements sufficiently extensive. Hence he considers it as a mortifying condescension to submit to that regular and strict discipline by which truth is investigated and knowledge obtained. Besides, pride is usually accompanied with such passions and vices as render the most important instructions painful and unacceptable. What but the pride and wickedness of the Jews, induced

them to reject those invaluable lessons of wisdom inculcated by the Saviour? What but their exalted opinion of themselves, of their wisdom and piety, that involved them in ruin? Individuals by a similar conduct must expect to share a similar fate. To the young a disposition to receive instruction, is peculiarly advantageous and important. As they are inexperienced they can form but a very imperfect estimate of human life, and the springs of human actions. They judge of things according to their wishes, imaginations, or passions. Hence they are incessantly liable to fall into error in judgment and conduct.—If to their inadvertent and precipitate dispositions are joined an haughty obstinacy and high opinion of themselves, disgrace and ruin are almost sure to follow. Their plans of conduct are guided by no settled principles, and of course are calculated to obtain no determinate objects. But if they possess a meek and pliant disposition, they can anticipate the wisdom of age and experience; they can diffuse a prudent discretion over their manners, and render their youth doubly engaging and useful. All have a propensity to justify their own sentiments, passions and actions. This propensity when confined within proper bounds is highly useful; but it almost invariably proceeds to such extremes, that it renders men blind and obstinate in their errors. Hence arises the great aversion which we generally have, to be reminded of our faults and our unwillingness to retract them. This is certainly very unreasonable; for it is as criminal to persevere in a fault as it is to commit it. To this great and universal error, which arises from too great an indulgence of self love, I know of no remedy but humility. This will dispose us to be moderate, and candid, and impartial respecting our actions or whatever is represented to us as erroneous. We shall with thankfulness receive the admonitions of our friends, and shall be careful to profit from the censures of our enemies. Thus humility will exalt us, while envy would depress us. For while the last points out our faults; the first corrects them.

IV. Humility renders us obedient to our Maker, and has the promise of his blessing.

In this view humility appears to be conducive to our best in-

terests. For how can we expect to prosper, how can we expect real permanent happiness, unless our hearts and conduct are coincident with the will of God? All the misfortunes, calamities and miseries of mankind, have resulted from disobedience to the divine commands. Pride rises up against the authority of heaven, it exalts itself above all that is called God. It renders men foolish, improvident, obstinate, and insolent. Hence Solomon said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Humility on the contrary renders men wise, meek, cautious, inoffensive, and desirous of obtaining the favour of heaven. Hence it is said, "With the lowly is wisdom"—"Before honor is humility." The man who practises humility is therefore pursuing the direct road to preferment. "God resisteth the proud; giveth grace to the humble." God will dwell with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit. Humility is inseparable from true religion, and will meet its most glorious reward in heaven.—The apostle Paul when subdued by the power of that Saviour whom he persecuted, became a meek and humble christian. In meekness he instructed those who opposed themselves to the truth. He considered himself as the least of all, and as the servant of all. He incessantly devoted himself to the will of his divine master and to the interests of mankind. What was the consequence? He could say with assurance, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Judge shall give me." In Christ we behold a most wonderful display of humble obedience to the will of God, and the consequent dignity to which he was exalted. Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet he made himself of no reputation; and took upon him the the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Behold the glorious consequence! "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.

Having delivered what I proposed on this subject, I shall now suggest some instruction and improvement from it, in a short address to the Senior Class.

You, young Gentlemen, my much esteemed friends and pupils, are now dissolving your immediate connection with this College, and with the officers who have had the care of your education. It is, on this occasion, natural for each of you to inquire, What are my future prospects in life? What occupation shall I pursue? What means and conduct shall I adopt to insure success and promotion? How shall I render myself meritorious, useful and respectable? To assist you, as to these things was my chief object in the preceding discourse. I have attempted to shew that humility leads to promotion and honor, by teaching its possessor to form a just estimate of himself, by inducing him to prefer others; by disposing him to receive instruction and admonition, and by rendering him obedient to God so as to secure his blessing. What I have farther to advance, respects the ways in which the amiable virtue humility is displayed and the objects towards which it is to be practised.

1. Practice it towards your superiors. That there is a great difference in men as to their mental powers, acquired abilities, religious and moral improvements, you have abundant evidence from your own observation. Intellectual worth always imposes an obligation of respect and attention. These nothing except envy can withhold. Never indulge this ignoble passion; but allow superior merit and excellence their full praise. In doing this you will act the part of reason and benevolence. You will engage in the cause of all virtue against all vice. For envy is a peculiar modification of selfishness; and every exercise of it implies a consciousness of superior excellence, and a desire to tarnish its lustre. While I advise you to pay respect to your superiors in worth; I wish not to be understood to mean, that you should implicitly follow them or receive their instructions, without reference to your own understandings. You may as well be destitute of reason and judgment, as to suffer others

wholly to control you in the exercise of them. If you happen to differ from those who are farther advanced in knowledge and experience than yourselves, all that can be expected of you is that you submit your own judgment, with all due respect and deference. This will evince a disposition to receive and follow the clearest light. I must here particularly recommend to you, to render the most prompt and cheerful obedience, in all things, just and lawful, to persons in civil stations, environed with delegated authority. In doing this you must lay aside all private considerations, and be governed wholly by the public good.

2. The amiable virtue, humility, you will do well always to manifest to your equals and inferiors. To the first be civil, affable and obliging in all your conduct. Be willing to allow them the just reward of their merit, and do not repine if they happen to be promoted above you. It will be more to your honor to suspect you have too highly estimated your own worth, than to envy their prosperity. To your inferiors be condescending and attentive. For there is scarcely any person whose assistance and good wishes, you may not at some time or other need. True humility does not require that you should reduce yourselves to an equality with all persons. This would be meanness or pusillanimity. Assume to yourselves no greater difference than your own circumstances and duties, as well as those of others, require. If you should ever be invested with authority in public stations, use it with moderation and for the public good. If you possess riches, they will rank you above the poor, but will increase the obligations of charity and benevolence. A mild, unassuming conduct, whatever may be your situation, will give lustre to every virtue and every action.—Time now requires that I give you my final benediction, by assuring you of my friendship, of my solicitude for your prosperity, and commending you to the great author of all good. May you walk humbly before him, that he may exalt you to honor in this world, and to eternal glory in the world to come.

AN

ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE IN COLUMBIA,

ON LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 1, 1816,

BEING THE DAY PREVIOUS TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE.



TO THE STUDENTS
OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

At your instance, I commit to the press the following sermon. As it was composed in haste, and without the most distant idea of publication, I am very sensible that it cannot sustain the ordeal of severe criticism. If however it affords you either instruction or pleasure, I shall be satisfied. To you I present this, as a small testimony of the affection and esteem which your conduct and diligent discharge of your duties, have excited.

J. MAXCY.



A S E R M O N.

“THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART,”—

MATTHEW xxii. 37.

To rational beings, nothing can be more interesting than to know the will of their Creator. This is the law of their existence, the measure of their virtue, and the source of their happiness. Beings endowed with intellectual and moral powers, can no more exist independent of law and obligation, than an effect can exist without a cause. Creatures through the abuse of their liberty may change; they may violate the laws by which they ought to be governed; they may become so enslaved to inveterate habits of evil, as to be morally incapable of virtuous affections and actions; and yet their obligations may remain, in all their extent, and in all their authority. Hence, as obligation flows from the supreme moral excellence of God, the former is as incapable of change or diminution, as the latter. Men are required to love God supremely, not because their compliance will make them happy, but because he deserves their obedience. To assert that any being is amiable or worthy, is the same as to assert, that that being deserves to be loved and esteemed. Moral excellence or worth carries with it and impresses on the mind of the percipient, the sentiment of desert. Hence the obligations of moral agents rise in importance and strength in proportion to the degree of excellence possessed by their cause. The nature of God therefore, originates and imposes obliga-

tions, of the widest extent, the highest importance, and the longest duration. These obligations are as immutable and imperishable as their origin ; and it is as impossible that beings to whom their power extends, should ever be exonerated from them, as it is, that the universe should be sustained and governed by a power inferior to that which created it. God therefore displays the highest wisdom, justice and goodness, in addressing every rational creature, in the language of our text, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." To show the ground and reasonableness of this requirement, and thus to disclose the nature of moral obligation and of true virtue, are my principal objects on this occasion.

I. The reasonableness of supreme love to God will appear if we consider the nature of God. Though our conceptions and knowledge of this subject, are necessarily limited and imperfect ; yet they may undoubtedly, be sufficiently adequate for the security of our virtue and happiness. To say that we can have no just, because we can have no perfect knowledge of the Supreme Being, is highly absurd. Did any one ever imagine that a grain of sand contained no part of the earth, because it did not contain the whole ? Would a reasonable man put out his eyes, because his sight could not penetrate the universe ? God has furnished us with as much knowledge as was proper for our state ; and with this knowledge we ought to rest satisfied. The attributes of God, which constitute his supreme perfection, are with propriety expressed under two denominations, natural and moral. The former do not in their nature necessarily involve those qualities which render a being amiable or estimable. They are not such as furnish a proper ground of moral obligation ; or authorize the possessor to prescribe laws to other beings. Such are the existence, knowledge and power of God. These attributes do not in themselves imply worth or moral excellence. For surely, a being is not worthy or estimable, merely because he exists, knows, and possesses power. We can easily conceive that a finite being in the highest order of existence may possess great power and knowledge, and yet be perfectly malevolent. If then it were possible for infinite power and

knowledge to exist without benevolence, they would inspire terror rather than love. A being therefore, is not necessarily amiable or deserving, because he exists every where, because he knows all things, and can perform all things. It is however impossible, that a being should possess infinite existence, power and knowledge, and at the same time be malevolent ; because these attributes belong to God. They do not however, constitute his supreme excellence, which in the language of scripture is called his holiness or his glory. For this we must look to his moral perfections. These involve the volitions of God ; his dispositions towards his creatures ; all his wise and good decrees concerning them ; all those qualities which render him the proper object of perfect love, obedience and adoration. When to the infinite existence, power and knowledge of God, we add his holiness, justice, mercy, faithfulness and veracity, we form the highest possible conception of his infinite amiableness or worth. To the virtuous man nothing is so excellent, nothing so desirable, as God's power and knowledge clothed with infinite goodness, justice and mercy. Infinite power and knowledge, prompted by infinite benevolence and justice, can do nothing but good, and produce nothing but happiness. God's right to prescribe laws to his rational creatures, to direct and control their active powers, results from his infinite perfection. He requires men to love him with all their hearts, not merely because they are dependent on him ; not merely because a compliance with his will, will render them happy ; but because he is what he is, and from his own inherent and unchangeable perfection deserving of their love. If then it is reasonable that man should esteem and regard the highest excellence ; that he should be such as God requires him to be ; that he should fix his desires on an object which they can never transcend ; that he should from the most exalted motives, pursue the highest happiness and perfection of which he is capable ; surely it is reasonable that he should love God with all his heart.

II. This will farther appear, if we consider the nature of man. God has rendered him capable of various kinds and degrees of enjoyment and happiness. For this purpose, he has furnished

him with different kinds and orders of powers, both corporeal and mental. To the exercise and cultivation of these within certain limits he has annexed a certain degree of pleasure. This he has done to incite man to activity, to secure his virtue, and to allure him on towards the highest dignity and glory of his nature. The powers of external sense are first evolved and employed in their proper sphere. To these, the innumerable productions of nature, present the charms of novelty and the blandishments of pleasure. Attracted by these, man eagerly springs forward in the career of his existence, and riots on the luxuriance of nature. Regardless of the laws imposed by his Maker, and unaided by the wisdom of experience, he hurries from object to object, and in the midst of his tumultuary progress, rushes into the region of disease and pain. He now looks back on the realms through which he has run, and instead of flowers, and streams, and shining skies, beholds a dreary waste, and sinks in solitary wretchedness. Ah! thoughtless youth, return to the path from which thou hast wandered. Thy happiness dwells not in the pleasures of sense.

To the powers and enjoyments of sense, succeed those of the fancy and imagination. The former of these suggests unreal images; the latter arranges and combines them into innumerable forms of ideal beauty. These eccentric and versatile powers are often a source of high and innocent enjoyment. They are essential to the vigorous exertions of genius; and through its creative powers and beautiful productions, may be rendered subservient to religion and morality. But these powers, if indulged beyond a certain limit become highly injurious, and furnish new causes of misery. As they spread a profusion of unreal charms over the course of human life, and over the works of nature, they accustom the mind to impracticable scenes of action and enjoyment; and thus render it averse to serious occupation, and disgusted with a world where pain is interwoven with pleasure; and where men must submit to labor if they would procure enjoyment. What misery do men often bring on themselves, and on those around them, by giving themselves up to the visions of fancy and the wild excursions of imagination! In proportion as these exalt us into the regions of visionary bliss,

they pervert or deaden the intellectual powers ; and by creating wants which can never be satisfied, and desires which can never be bounded, multiply the causes of fictitious sorrow, and real disappointment. Let him therefore, who would usefully and honorably fill the station allotted him by Providence, subject his imaginative powers to the control of the noble principles of reason, and to the dictates of practical wisdom. To do this effectually, he must look up with supreme regard to the Author of his being, who bestowed all his faculties, and prescribed the laws of their operation.

Next in order, are the powers of taste. These relate primarily, to natural visible beauty ; and are designed to attach us to the works of creation, that from these we may ascend up to their glorious Author. In the progress of the mind towards perfection ; in the evolution of its principles and energies, these powers extend to all that is grand, sublime and beautiful, in the productions of human genius. The sphere of our enjoyments and pleasures is enlarged ; and if we fondly resign ourselves to these, without aspiring to nobler pursuits and purer joys ; we shall at last be filled with sorrow, for satisfactions whose causes will have ceased, and whose end had been perverted by excessive indulgence.

Another power, and of an higher order, is the moral sense. The immediate object of this, is moral beauty.—This, like natural beauty, is perceived, and its effects instantaneously felt ; but it cannot be accurately defined, because the principles of universal beauty are not known. Wherever we have a direct perception, accompanied with esteem and approbation, of virtuous affections and actions, there exists moral beauty. This, independent of all other considerations produces a sense of worth, desert or excellence. Thus justice, mercy, beneficence, are not seen with indifference, but with esteem and approbation. No animal is so constituted, except man, as to be sensible of moral beauty ; to be capable of loving and imitating it. From its own intrinsic amiableness, it excites emotions and passions as certainly and irresistibly as natural beauty. This part of man's constitution shows his great superiority over the brutes, indicates his high destiny for the society of heaven, and enables him for-

ever to approximate the infinite source of all beauty and happiness. Moral beauty in its highest essence, as it exists in God, is the immutable ground of all moral obligation; the true motive, the standard, and the end of all virtue. No finite, intelligent being, therefore, can, in any period of existence, or in any situation, be exempt from moral obligation, or from the duty of loving God with all his heart. When God requires this, he requires no more than he deserves on account of his own inherent excellence; no more than it is our duty and our highest happiness to render. How desirable then is virtue! How invaluable the happiness which flows from it! Were man destitute of moral sense, he could have no perception of right or wrong, of virtue and sin, of good or ill desert; he could appropriate neither praise nor blame; nor could he be a subject of reward and punishment. It is therefore a dangerous error in ethics to say that it is of no consequence whether the moral sense be innate or acquired. God has not rested the virtue and happiness of his creature man, on such an uncertain foundation as a factitious habit. The moral laws, or the principles of them, from which God requires man to act, are all founded in the nature of God and man. This is the only solid basis on which morality can be duly enforced; on which the nature, extent and authority of moral obligation can be demonstrated.

Another power possessed by man is denominated intellect. This bestows on him his highest dignity and glory, and gives him his chief superiority over all other animals. Its exercises and objects, are the perception, investigation and communication of truth. As we arrive at the knowledge of this through different mediums and different processes of mind, it may be distinguished, and distributed into the following denominations; sensible, intuitive, demonstrative, poetical, theological, and historical. The first results from the direct perceptions of our senses, both internal and external; the second belongs to axioms, or self evident propositions; the third results from our reasoning powers employed in deducing things less known, from things more known; the fourth consists in the possible existence of things within the limits of verisimilitude; the fifth depends on the testimony of God, and the sixth on the testimony of men.

To these denominations of truth, may be reduced all the knowledge of which the human mind is capable. What a wide field, is here opened for the exercise of the intellectual powers! To these we are indebted for all the benefits resulting from arts and sciences; from agriculture and commerce; from legislation and government; from all the economical, political and religious institutions of civil society. This wonderful power, which has extended the empire of man over the works and laws and elements of nature is the medium through which we procure the highest blessings of existence and render them subservient to our happiness. The intellect and all our other powers were bestowed for our good, and the glory of our Creator. He only could prescribe the laws of their operation and direct them to their proper ends. These laws he has not left to be enforced by the decisions of reason, but has called in the aid of our affections and passions. Supreme love to God "fulfils the law," because it brings all our moral sentiments and active powers into subjection to the divine will. Love to God therefore, is perfectly reasonable, as it is the only security for our virtue and happiness. Thus whether we survey our sensitive, imaginative, our moral or intellectual powers, we find abundant reason to love their great and beneficent author. "Of him, and to him, and through him are all things." All the beauty that smiles on the earth, and all the glory that shines in the heavens; all the virtues that adorn the minds of saints and angels, are but emanations from the great source of infinite excellence. Were this suspended, the whole creation would fade under the eye of its author; evil would every where shoot forth in all its deformity; and the car of death would roll in ruin through the universe. As the Author of our being is the source of all virtue and happiness; the centre and life of nature; how reasonable is it, that as he wills our felicity he should require our love?

III. This will farther appear if we consider the state of man.

This is a state of entire dependence, and must continue such as long as man shall exist. No power less than that which created man, could sustain him one moment. Existence therefore is continued creation. Of consequence, man is as com-

pletely dependent on God, as an effect is on its cause. Dependence supposes power on one side, and imbecility on the other. In finite beings, power does not give right; but in God it always does, and in the highest degree: because in him power is never exerted without infinite wisdom and goodness. Right and obligation are correlative. The obligation of man therefore to obey the will of God, and love him supremely, is of the highest conceivable nature; because it is imposed and enforced by the immensity of God's power. We may observe farther, that the state of man is such, that he is accountable to God for his conduct. A thorough conviction of this truth, is of the highest importance; for without it there can be no steady principle of virtue, no proper sense of the authority of moral obligation. It is not enough to tell men that they are accountable; their understandings must be convinced. It has been shown, in the first part of this discourse, that the nature of God is the foundation of moral obligation; and in the second, that this obligation reaches to all the powers of man. There cannot be a greater absurdity than to suppose that such a being, possessed of moral sense, reason and freedom, capable of virtue and vice, should be brought into existence, and be left without a law to govern him and make him accountable. Virtue and vice, from their nature, suppose and imply a law, a standard of right. The same is applied in moral agency. If therefore we admit that man is not accountable, we admit that there is no law,—no supreme excellence that originates it—in short, that there is no God. This of all absurdities is the greatest; because, if there is no God, then there must at some period have been universal non-existence: And this must always have been the case; because that which has no existence can never produce any. The whole created universe therefore is a direct proof of the existence of God; unless we say that the universe created itself; which is the same as to say that nothing can produce something, or that an effect can exist without a cause. We must therefore either admit all the absurdities of atheism, or that there is a God. If we admit this, we admit man's accountability; for all the arguments which prove the former, prove the latter.

The reasonableness of supreme love to God will farther ap-

pear from the wonderful displays of divine love in redeeming man from a state of impotence, depravity and guilt. In the sacred scriptures, the love of God in sending his son to die for the expiation of human guilt, is exhibited in a light calculated to disarm man of his enmity, to emancipate him from the slavery of sin, and to inspire him with the most sublime and ardent affection : " God," says an inspired apostle, " commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The angels in heaven are so affected with the love of God towards man, that they desire " to look into" the word of redemption. To this all the works of creation and providence are but subordinate parts. If men are bound to love God because he is their creator, how much more because he is their redeemer ! Thus whether we consider the nature of God, the nature and state of man, or the divine wisdom and goodness displayed in our redemption, we shall find abundant reasons for exercising supreme love to God.

From the preceding discourse, we may come to the following important conclusions—

First,—That the moral perfection of God is the foundation of moral obligation.

Second,—That the essence of true virtue, or holiness, consists in supreme love to God.

Third,—That there is no possible method of obtaining true and permanent happiness, but by the practice of virtue ; because nothing else can assimilate us to God, and make us partakers of his nature.

These three principles place morality on its proper basis, and present the only motives of sufficient efficacy to enforce the practice of virtue.

We have reason, therefore, to conclude, that those systems of moral philosophy which omit the doctrine of future rewards and punishments are erroneous. The Christian system derives its superiority over all others, not so much from the novelty of

its doctrines as from the weight of its motives. It encourages virtue and represses vice, by appealing to considerations of eternal importance. On the one hand, it presents to the obstinate impenitent transgressor, divine justice arrayed in all the terrors of almighty power, and on the other holds out to the humble penitent believer the atoning blood of the Son of God. Divine truth proclaims to the world, that "the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation." Without embracing, believing and obeying the gospel, we can have no hope of eternal life; but must remain in a "fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation." The death and resurrection of Christ have dispersed the shades which hung over the valley of death, and disclosed the glories and terrors of the eternal world. All that is great, sublime and terrific, on earth, in heaven or hell, is now addressed to the hopes and the fears of men. Those, therefore, who reject the gospel, and spurn at its precepts and its discipline, must be deemed irreclaimable, and be consigned to destruction.

We may in the next place observe, from the preceding discourse, the wisdom and goodness of God in making such ample provision for the happiness of man, by endowing him with such various and noble powers. How great are his obligations to use and improve these as God requires! The great objects of all human knowledge are, God, nature and man. For the knowledge of the first, especially of what are called his moral perfections, we must recur to divine revelation. None but God can know and comprehend his own nature and his own determinations; and none but he can disclose them. In our knowledge of nature and man, we must be guided wholly by facts, by observation and experience. In nature we see what God does; in revelation, why he does it. The study of nature is the best preparation for the reception of revelation. In both is displayed the same great good and incomprehensible being. The only ground on which we can infer his existence from his works, is their incomprehensibility. For if we could comprehend the

works of God, we could measure them by our own powers, and resolve them into a being no greater than ourselves. The visible universe is a theatre of effects; and we know that these must proceed from adequate causes. Nature is an external display of God. Powers and causes are hidden and invisible; and the proper objects of intellect. In studying into the works of nature, we should avoid speculative hypotheses, and be guided wholly by facts. But we must remember that facts are not principles, and that mathematical demonstrations are no proof of the existence of physical powers. Reason is the proper instrument of truth. In the investigations of physical science, experiments merely furnish the mind with facts. These, reason arranges, compares, combines and reduces under facts still more comprehensive; and these facts we are obliged to consider as ultimate, until some more general can be discovered. In all parts of nature, within and without us, above and below, we meet and feel the invisible God. Through all his works, all is life and motion; a ceaseless circle of change, of generation, growth, decay, dissolution and revivification. Nothing is lost, —nothing annihilated. Matter was never seen in a state of rest —this would destroy it—It came from God in a state of activity: For that whose essence is life and energy, could never produce inactivity and death. The whole of visible nature is comprised in matter and motion. These have their origin in one common principle; and that principle is power. This originates, modifies, preserves, perfects and dissolves every portion of temporary nature. This is a world of effects, and these are all produced by motion. Without this we could exercise no power over the smallest particle of matter, nor could the laws of nature exist. The splendid and ever varying phenomena of the universe would cease; and all its various parts, with their majestic decorations, would revert to their original source. How far creation extends from its lowest to its highest limit, we cannot determine; but this we know, that God has reserved to himself, as his peculiar prerogative, the power of creation and annihilation. Within these limits all that is called nature exists, all her laws operate, and all her phenomena are displayed. Nature is a system of living laws, flowing from God; and in their

endless variety of combinations and results, producing all possible effects, except those which are peculiar to almighty power. What an august, what a magnificent scene is nature ! Whether we survey this lower world with its appendages, or ascend into the vast ampitheatre of God above us, we are filled with astonishment and awe, and are forced to exclaim, “ These are thy works, parent of good, Almighty ! ”

From the preceding discourse we may farther remark, that the internal constitution of man is wonderfully adjusted to his external condition. Designing wisdom is no where more legible than in the laws which bind man to all parts of nature. The same principles of order and symmetry, of succession and variety, which govern the powers and operations of mind, extend to the larger portions of the universe, pervade their structure, and bind them together in one vast and magnificent system. The innumerable forms of matter which occupy this august spectacle, astonish the mind of man, and while they spread delight through all his faculties, proclaim him the priest and the monarch of nature. The whole visible universe is the hand-writing of God, and speaks a language known in wisdom’s ear, and calculated to excite man’s curiosity, to rouse all his powers into the most vigorous exertion ; to elevate and expand his hopes, and to accelerate his course along the shining path of immortality.

God has connected man with all his works, and exhibited in his constitution an epitome of the universe. By his corporeal frame, he is allied to matter ; by his animated organization, to the whole vegetable and animal world ; by his moral and intellectual powers, to God and all intelligent beings. What a noble being is man ! What an exalted station does he hold in the works of God ! What vast extremes does he combine in his nature ! On the one hand, he ranks with the highest angel that burns before the throne of God, and on the other with the meanest worm that crawls on earth ! His present state is the beginning of his existence, and is rapidly passing away. He is travelling on to higher hopes and brighter scenes. Though he is doomed to sink into the dust and become a prisoner of the tomb ; yet when the wheels of time shall have run their destined course ; when nature shall have arrived at the utmost limit of all her

processes and powers, the voice of God will call him forth to share his lofty destiny and run an endless race of glory. We may rest assured that God will suffer none of his works to be lost ; and however they at present groan under the bondage of corruption, yet they will assuredly be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God ! To this result, all the laws which obtain through the whole sphere of fallen nature, directly tend ; and are holding on in their undeviating course, through the innumerable mutations, compositions and dissolutions incident to a state of disjoined and warring elements. The material universe is a mere temporary creation, which will soon pass away. It is rapidly rolling on through innumerable changes towards its final destiny. Nature will then throw off her visible material form, assuming her spiritual properties, and shining in all her primeval glory. Time and place, succession and change will then cease ; for these are merely the adjuncts of visible and tangible forms ; and can have no existence when these forms shall cease,—when God from heaven shall proclaim, “ Behold I make all things new.”

Let us not then despond, though we are subjected to vanity. God has subjected us in hope. Let us rather exult and rejoice, knowing that he who has promised is the unchanging God of truth. Let us cheerfully submit to him ; and view with rapturous emotions, the grand and majestic march of nature, through the long train of fleeting, changing and perishing forms of visible matter, until we reach our ultimate limit in a disencumbered and renovated world ; in “ an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” The laws of nature will then have accomplished their ultimate destination—matter will be transmuted and sublimed into its primordial principles—every atom will have found its station, and will be poised on its immoveable centre—the conflicting elements of fallen nature will be harmonized under the empire of love ; pain, and sorrow, and death shall no longer have a name or a place in the works of God—and one boundless tide of glory shall pervade the universe !



A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

CHAPEL OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE,

JULY 4th, 1819,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS OF COLUMBIA.



The South Carolina College, August 4th, 1819.

TO JAMES T. GOODWYN, ESQ. INTENDANT OF
THE TOWN OF COLUMBIA.

SIR,—To the request of the Town Council, and Citizens of Columbia, for the publication of my discourse on the 4th of July last ; I readily give my assent ; and beg leave through you to express my most grateful acknowledgements, for the honor conferred on me on this occasion.

Accept my thanks for the very polite and delicate manner in which you have communicated the wishes of my fellow citizens.

With great esteem and respect, and with best wishes for your prosperity, I subscribe myself your friend and servant,

J. MAXCY.

1870

1871

1872

A DISCOURSE.

"HE HATH NOT DEALT SO WITH ANY NATION; AND AS FOR HIS JUDGMENTS, THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THEM. PRAISE YE THE LORD."—147 PSALM, 20th verse.

THE blessings which God bestowed on the ancient Israelites were great and peculiar. After delivering them from bondage imposed by a cruel tyrant, he carried them as on eagles' wings, through innumerable displays of mercies and judgments; he instructed and governed them by miraculous interpositions of his providence; and after discomfiting all their enemies, triumphantly established them in the promised land. Here, he most signally interposed on their behalf; and was indeed, their shield in war, and their sun in peace. He dealt not so with other nations. These, left to their own direction, wandered into distant quarters of the globe; lost the knowledge of their creator; debased and dishonored themselves, by the vilest superstitions and the most enormous vices. On the other hand, the Israelites, chosen by God for his peculiar people, were taken under his immediate government and instruction, and furnished with laws religious, moral and political, which at length elevated them to the highest pitch of national prosperity. Well might the royal Psalmist say, "He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord."

That men should praise God, for national, as well as for individual blessings, is the injunction of reason and the dictate of revelation. Ingratitude is of all vices, the most vile and degrading. It robs man of all those humane and generous feelings, of all those high and ennobling sentiments, which impart value to his nature and dignity to his character. So great is our attachment to the present world; so busily are we occupied in visionary scenes of happiness, or hurried on in the delusive pursuits of ambition and of wealth, that we are perpetually liable to incur the reproach of ingratitude to God, unless reminded of our duty by some stated occasion, or by some unusual dispensation of divine providence. Hence, God, in order to secure the fidelity of his ancient people, and to keep alive a sense of their obligations, enjoined upon them a solemn festival to be kept in commemoration of their deliverance from bondage. Yet notwithstanding this, and innumerable displays of power and goodness; this highly favored people were frequently guilty of forgetting God, their great benefactor. How often does he remind them of their rebellion! How often does he impress upon their minds their wonderful emancipation, as an event which ought forever to secure their grateful obedience, which ought for ever to be celebrated with enthusiastic devotion? let us apply these things to ourselves. An inspired Apostle says, they were written for us, for examples. Has not God wrought for us a wonderful deliverance? Has he not crushed our oppressor? Has he not smitten the Dragon who lies in the great waters, whose limbs stretch through every ocean, whose voice shakes the ends of the world? God has indeed been our refuge and strength; a very present help in time of trouble. He has not only delivered us from servitude; but crowned us with innumerable blessings. His almighty hand planted the seed of liberty, as an handful of corn in the top of the mountains, whose fruit shakes like Lebanon. Calling to mind the events of our past history, and comparing them with those of other nations, we are obliged to adopt the language of our text, and say, "He hath not dealt so with any nation." As we are assembled to commemorate the nativity of American freedom, and as this auspicious anniversary has fallen on a day peculiarly consecrated

to God, we may with propriety call to mind some of the great scenes through which he has conducted us, and recount some of the distinguished blessings he has conferred upon us, as a nation. It becomes us as men and as christians, to bow before his holy altars; to adore his divine majesty, and to present our grateful offerings. It becomes us to venerate that great Being whose beneficent providence has watched over and guided the destinies of our beloved country; it becomes us to recognize our great obligations for his goodness, to humble ourselves before him for our manifold sins, and to confide in that unchanging mercy, which embraces and blesses the universe. It becomes us, in all things to notice and acknowledge, the providence, and the power of God. He is indeed the governor among the nations. In the pages of inspiration, he is every where described as the great and universal agent in the affairs of men. So perfect is his providence, that the hairs of our heads are all numbered; even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without his notice. Well then may we believe, that the great concerns of the world, the foundation of nations, the rise and fall of states and kingdoms; all their political concerns, and their various fortunes in peace and in war; are all under his immediate control and direction. Strictly and truly speaking, he is the sole agent in the universe. The smallest deviation from this principle will land us in atheism. Hence the scriptures represent God, as exalting and depressing nations at his pleasure. To one he gives great and good men; wise and just rulers, prudent counsellors; upright judges, heroic warriors and eloquent orators; to another he raises up an haughty and relentless tyrant, and entails on it all the evils of slavery and oppression; of injustice and cruelty. What a contrast to this do we find in the writings of uninspired men! Here, all things are referred, to mere secondary causes, to subordinate agencies, and God is overlooked and forgotten.

Fortunately for this country, many of its first occupants were religious men. They acknowledged God in all things. Confiding in his providence, they left their native shores; flying from oppression; braving the dangers of the ocean; and heroically urging their course, towards this vast and howling wilderness.

Here they arrived ; here they bowed the knee to the God of the ocean and the land. To him they piously committed their future destinies. As soon as they had obtained a settlement, they established schools of learning and places of public worship. I mention these things, because, it is principally to these that we are indebted for all our prosperity. An ignorant people would have submitted to any encroachment from the parent state ; an irreligious and wicked people, never could have formed an union to resist oppression. The American people could with confidence appeal to God in the hour of danger. They did appeal. Their cries ascended and came before the Almighty. He graciously interposed for his oppressed and suffering people. He raised up among them a band of great, wise and virtuous patriots, to preside and direct in council ; a band of skilful, virtuous and heroic captains, to command in the field and direct the storm of battle. The interposition of divine providence, was eminently conspicuous, in the first general congress ; what men, what patriots, what independent, heroic spirits ! chosen by the unbiassed voice of the people ; chosen as all public servants ought to be, without favour and without fear ; what an august assembly of sages ! Rome in the height of her glory, fades before it. There never was in any age, or nation, a body of men who for general information, for the judicious use of the results of civil and political history, for eloquence and virtue ; for true dignity, elevation and grandeur of soul, that could stand a comparison with the first American Congress ! See what the people will do when left to themselves ; to their unbiassed good sense, and to their true interests ! The ferocious Gaul, would have dropped his sword at the hall-door, and have fled thunder-struck as from an assembly of Gods ! Whom do I behold ! an Hancock, a Jefferson, an Adams, a Henry, a Lee, a Rutledge ! —Glory to these illustrious spirits ! On you depend the destinies of your country ; the fate of three millions of men ; and of the countless millions of their posterity ! Shall these be slaves, or will you make a noble stand for liberty, against a power whose triumphs are already co-extensive with the earth ; whose legions trample on thrones and sceptres ; whose thunders bellow on every ocean ? How tremendous the occasion ! How

vast the responsibility ! The President and all the members of this august assembly take their seats. Every countenance tells the mighty struggle within. Every tongue is silent. It is a pause in Nature, that solemn, awful stillness, which precedes the earthquake and the tornado ! At length Demosthenes arises ; he only is adequate to the great occasion, the Virginian Demosthenes, the mighty Henry ! What dignity ! What majesty ! Every eye fastens upon him. Firm, erect, undaunted, he rolls on the mighty torrent of his eloquence. What a picture does he draw of the horrors of servitude and the charms of freedom ? At once he gives the full rein to all his gigantic powers, and pours his own heroic spirit into the minds of his auditors ; they become as one man ; actuated by one soul—and the universal shout is “ Liberty or Death ! ” This single speech of this illustrious man gave an impulse, which probably decided the fate of America. His eloquence seized and moved the assembled sages ; as the descending hail storm, bursting in thunder, rending the forests, and shaking the mountains. God bestows on nations no greater gift, than great and good men, endowed with the high and commanding powers of eloquence. Such a man as Patrick Henry, may on some great occasion, when the happiness or misery of millions depends on a single decision, render more important services to a nation, than all the generations of a century.

When we look back to the state of the Colonies at the time of the revolution, we are struck with the unanimity, the wisdom and firmness which pervaded their councils and decisions. This may in part be accounted for from their previous habits, and the privileges they had enjoyed under their several charters. As to rights, a perfect equality reigned among the people. No established clergy, no privileged and haughty nobility, trod on their necks and robbed them of the fruits of their labors. The people were all enlightened, they knew their rights ; they had from their first settlement exercised the power of granting their own contributions to the parent state. This power was secured to them by royal charter ; and they well knew that the moment they were deprived of it, they must be slaves. This was evidently the only alternative.—Besides this the colonies had not

only been just ; but generous, liberal, far beyond their resources, to the parent state. In reading their history we are astonished at the large sums of monies, and the numbers of troops, raised to aid the military and naval enterprises of Britain. These were all forgotten by a proud and haughty ministry. No man can read the history of the colonies for ten years previous to the revolution, without indignation and astonishment. The British government seemed to be bound in a spell of infatuation. They turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the colonies ; they spurned their petitions. The colonies merely demanded their accustomed rights ; they dreaded the approaching unequal contest ; they ardently desired a reconciliation with the parent state. This was undoubtedly the general sentiment. During the session of the assembly of Virginia ; news suddenly arrived that the stamp act was repealed. So great was their enthusiasm, that they voted a statue to the King ! Nothing was easier than a perfect reconciliation with the colonies. When intreaties, remonstrances, and humiliations had been exhausted on one side ; and injuries, oppressions and insults on the other, no resource was left but an appeal to the God of armies. The Americans relying on the justice of their cause, with confidence committed it to that God, who rules among the nations.

We now approach a most tremendous crisis. The colonies were then but thinly peopled ; they had made but little progress in national wealth and improvement ; they were destitute of military skill, and of almost all the munitions of war ; they had no general government over them ; no supreme controlling power, to develop the resources of the country ; to organize and direct their armies. Never did a people engage in a contest apparently more unequal and desperate. But we must remember, that all they held dear, all that they deemed life worth contending for was at stake ! They loved liberty and hated slavery ; they loved their country ; and worshipped their God ; they loved life ; but feared not death ! They well knew " that the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The disparity in the contest was, to human view, as great as that between the shepherd of Israel and the gigantic Goliath. Our fathers trusted in God, and were not confounded. He in-

spired them with wisdom, with unanimity and courage. Each individual felt a deep interest in the destiny of his country, and merged all private considerations in the public good. Every countenance betrayed the deep concerns that swayed within. Then might you see the people through all parts of the land forsaking their customary labors, resorting to the house of prayer, and pouring out their cries before the God of the armies of heaven. He heard, and pitied his afflicted people.

The peculiar favor of heaven was highly conspicuous in the great men, who by their wisdom and valor protected and saved this oppressed and injured people. Deaf must be that ear, which does not hear the divine voice, blind must be that eye that does not see the divine hand, in the call and appointment of Washington. In the complicated difficulties and dangers of that crisis to discharge the duties of commander-in-chief, required an union of talents, virtues and qualifications, rarely coincident; and each of which, on common occasions, would have added splendor to the hero, or the sage. All those lofty qualities which constitute a consummate general, met in our beloved Washington. To the cautious prudence of Fabius, he united the intrepid heroism of Alexander. Cool and self-possessed in the midst of dangers, he never lost, nor gave an advantage. So small were his resources, so difficult to be replaced when exhausted; so critically was he often situated, that the salvation of his country seemed to depend on a single movement. No man believes that such a commander as Alexander, Cæsar, or Bonaparte, could have saved America. More was to be gained by prudent delay, by skilful movement and self-denial; than by active offensive operations. Other great commanders have been supplied with numerous well disciplined armies, and all things necessary to successful warfare. If they lost one army, another was ready. With Washington, every thing was different. Literally speaking, he had to create an army. With such means as he possessed; in the face of a superior foe, commanded by the ablest generals; it would have been high honor, to have kept the field, or to have escaped destruction; but to obtain victory, to secure the freedom of a nation was the height of glory, a destiny more than human. We look up to such great

and good men as Washington, as to superior beings who seem to be occasionally sent into the world to adjust its concerns ; and exalt its destinies. While Washington was nobly sustaining the contest in the field, it was of the highest importance to the United States, to obtain from foreign nations, an acknowledgment of their independence. Here the goodness of God is eminently conspicuous in raising up such men as Adams and Franklin. The former was sent to Holland ; the latter to France. To discharge the high trust committed to them, required no ordinary degree of heroism, talents and skill. In crossing the ocean, they were every moment, liable to fall into the hands of an implacable foe, who they well knew would bring them to an ignominious death. They nobly dared, and succeeded. When Mr. Adams arrived in Holland, it is said, that he was so narrowly watched by the British minister, that he was obliged to conceal himself, to avoid assassination. At length he published his famous manifesto to the states of Holland. In this masterly performance, he so clearly demonstrated that the true interests of Holland, required the recognition of the independence of the United States ; that he was forthwith admitted to a public audience ; and received the honors due to his rank. This success gained in spite of the utmost efforts of the British minister ; was a noble triumph ; and while it crowned with immortal honor, its author ; it rendered incalculable service to his beloved country. The illustrious Franklin, was not less successful. His great talents, his extensive knowledge ; his weight and dignity of character ; his venerable age ; his ardent benevolence, and truly patriarchal manners ; gave him an ascendancy at the French court ; which perhaps, was never obtained by any other minister. What a spectacle is it, to behold this venerable philosopher, at the age of eighty, devoting all his time, and great talents, in the most laborious services, for his beloved country ! Much of his success was undoubtedly owing to his personal influence with the King. When the French minister, had reported that a loan to the extent required by Dr. Franklin, could not be granted ; the King apparently, out of delicacy to the Doctor's feelings, presented him with a large sum out of his private purse, and declared, that he meant it not as a loan, but

as a gift to the United States. The hearts of Kings and Emperors are in the hand of God, and he turns them as he pleases. Among the States who had the honor to furnish eminent persons for the public service, South Carolina holds a distinguished rank. Her illustrious Laurens and Pinckney, will live in the hearts of their countrymen while patriotism and liberty, have a votary on earth. It becomes us to do justice to our great patriots and heroes ; to the founders of our national freedom. It has somehow happened that the successful warrior has ranked higher in the admiration of mankind than the philosopher and statesman ; and yet the services of the latter, have been as eminent and extensive as those of the former. There is a splendor and pomp in warlike achievements, which dazzle the imaginations of men ; so that they will admire and applaud even an Alexander, while robbing and murdering unoffending nations. Fear is the greatest and most universal weakness, to which man is subject. He who can rise above it, and bid defiance to danger and death ; seems more than mortal. Besides, there is something animating and attractive in the movements of armies ; in the noise and tumult of battle, in the shouts of victory and triumph. Danger bestows a dignity which nothing else can ; especially when it decides the fate of nations. No man stands so high in the esteem and veneration of all America as Washington ; and yet perhaps, it may with truth be asserted, that the services rendered by Adams and Franklin ; though less splendid, as from their nature they must be ; are nevertheless not less meritorious ; not less important, than those performed by Washington. Had it not been for those services, perhaps Washington himself, with all his greatness could not have achieved what he did. When news arrived of the success of our ministers in France and Holland, how did our prospects brighten ! How did the hopes of Washington himself revive ! How did every heart from Maine to Georgia gather fresh strength ? Every countenance brightened with renovated hope ; as when the shout of victory burst forth from Saratoga, from Princeton, and York Town ! By the divine blessing on our counsels and arms, independence was at length secured.

A situation can scarcely be conceived more perilous, than that

of the United States at the close of the war. Our army disbanded, unpaid, irritated at their wrongs and privations, spreading their discontents among the people ; our general government possessing powers merely advisory ; thirteen independent, sovereign states, with separate and opposite interests ; different views and clashing councils ; immense public debts to be provided for and paid ; the pressure which had heretofore held them together removed ; our old enemy eagerly watching to profit by our divisions and dissensions : All these presented a complication of difficulties, and dangers, with which human wisdom, and human power, seemed incompetent to struggle. To prescribe a form of government which should possess adequate powers, without interfering with the sovereignty of the individual states ; which should command resources to establish public credit, to cherish and protect our exterior relations and interests ; to bind the independent members into one great confederacy of rights and powers ; to secure an impartial administration of justice ; these imposed a task which required the wisdom and skill of all the sages of ancient and modern times. Herculean as was the achievement, it was accomplished. Those great and good men, who had conducted us to victory and independence, assisted in our councils, and under the smiles of heaven, blessed this nation with the federal constitution. The great Washington was placed at the head of the new government. It was believed that no other individual possessed sufficient weight of character ; to inspire confidence, to reconcile contending parties ; to impart energy to laws ; to revive public credit, and give dignity to public character. With infinite reluctance did this illustrious man leave his beloved retirement and commit himself to the storm of public life. When convinced by the judgment and intreaties of the wisest and best men in America ; he nobly sacrificed his private wishes to the public good ; and gave himself to his beloved country. Under his fostering care, united America, rose like the primitive world from chaos ; she arose, " fair as the moon ; clear as the sun ; and terrible as an army with banners." The thunder ceased to roar ; the tempest that had swept through the land, died away in silence ; the heavens shed their selectest

influence; and the abodes of freedom smiled in renovated beauty.

Philosophers and statesmen of foreign nations considered the establishment of the federal government as a hazardous experiment, founded in visionary speculation. The sentiment had prevailed that republican institutions, were utterly impracticable over an extensive territory and numerous population. It was boldly asserted that the powers of our government, were incompetent to the great ends of political association; that the first convulsion from within, or violence from without, would crumble it to atoms; prostrate our towering hopes, and leave us a prey to civil war, or foreign subjugation. How completely these ominous predictions, were falsified by subsequent experience, need not be told in this assembly.

God has blessed us with a succession of great and good men to preside over our national government, whose wisdom, fidelity and success, have confounded the proud dogmas of philosophy, repelled the assaults of insulting tyranny; and erected to liberty and glory, a monument, which will forever defy the earthquake and the tempest. We are bound by the strongest ties of honor, of gratitude and interest, to preserve and to transmit to posterity, undiminished; the rich inheritance, bequeathed us by the founders of American independence. But few of these illustrious men remain to witness the noble effects of their counsels and toils; and to confirm by their example, the principles which formerly swayed in their bosoms. Their great compatriots have been called home to exult in brighter scenes; and the laurels which bloomed on their brows have ascended to flourish forever in the fields of the blessed.

The blessings which the bountiful author of nature has poured out on these United States, demand our most submissive obedience and grateful recollection. While the tempest of war has poured out its vengeance on the nations of the old world, while "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," hath shrouded them in the habiliments of wo; our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; our fields have rejoiced in the gale of health, and our skies have smiled in the rainbow of peace.

If we reflect on the causes which have originated our government, which have sustained and given it its present pre-eminence, we shall discover abundant reason to confide in its permanence, and increasing excellence. All the great rights of man in civil and political society, are secured by our constitution ; powers sufficiently energetic are deposited in the supreme magistrate ; and their abuse anticipated by the frequency of election ; our judiciary independent, that it may be impartial ; and yet charged with the highest responsibility ; the sovereignty of the states defined and protected ; and full scope given, to call forth the ambition of all our citizens for the attainment of wealth, distinction and honor. While we behold most of the nations of the earth, involved in ignorance, degraded by superstition, and crushed under the sway of arbitrary power ; we behold our own enlightened by science, exalted and refined by religion ; adorned and blessed by freedom. Such is the universal diffusion of knowledge, that every individual feels a lively interest in the government, and watches with a jealous eye every encroachment of power. Our government rests wholly on the opinion of the people. This opinion to be correct, must be enlightened ; it must be founded on impartial examination, and rational conviction. Hence appear the necessity and importance of rendering education and knowledge universal. Without these, a free government cannot exist. Bad and artful men can easily render themselves popular among the ignorant, for the purpose of personal aggrandisement. Intrigue and dishonesty find their resources in the region of darkness. They dare not “ come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov’d.” Literature and science, refine the manners, invigorate and expand all the social affections, and prepare men for the high offices of virtue and religion. None but an enlightened people can be free ; and such a people may be free forever. To this end nothing is so important as a deep sense of moral and religious obligation. The people who fear and worship God, will certainly be just and benevolent to each other. Such a people will always support a righteous government.

To preserve the union of the states, is an object of the first

importance, and of the highest necessity to the stability and permanence of our government. This has been deemed, especially by foreigners, to be utterly impracticable. But we must remember, that the people of these states do not look to a power from without to hold them together and to cement their union. An active everliving force from within ; an ardent love of their government as the creature of their power and the child of the affection ; a firm and universal conviction, founded on reason and experience, that all the great ends of the most perfect political association, are embraced by their present constitution ; these constitute the strong bond, the all pervading moral force, which binds these states together, and constitutes them one mighty confederacy of rights, interests and powers. Like the wheels of Ezekiel these states derive all their life and energy from "the spirit within them." It has been asserted that the force of government cannot be felt over so vast an extent of territory, as the United States. Let us consider our local advantages. These present such facilities for union and communication ; that it seems as if providence had designed this western continent for one mighty republic. Look at the majestic rivers which roll their waters through every part of our country ; survey the wide-spreading lakes and the oceans bordering upon us ; to these, add the advantages of canals ; and public roads, with our late improvements in navigation ; all these circumstances, by facilitating internal intercourse, do in effect, render the states contiguous. Such are our advantages for internal commerce, that these states can supply all the necessaries and luxuries of life ; they can grow up to a great, powerful and wealthy nation without the aid of external commerce. The means of intercourse, are so completely within our power, that our mutual wants may be supplied ; our mutual, though opposite interests, reconciled and promoted ; and what at first appeared like a source of discord may be converted into a bond of union. So great is our diversity of soil and climate, that all the valuable productions of the globe are within our limits. The great extent of our territory therefore, instead of dividing, will unite us. The great modern improvement in navigation, has diminished

distance and time, and rendered the extremes of our country neighbours.

Nothing will contribute more to our prosperity in peace, or to our security in war, than the means of easy and rapid transportation to every quarter of our territory. To obtain this, no part of the globe presents such local facilities and such exhaustless resources for defence or commerce. By a kind and bountiful providence, we are so situated, that it is in our power to avoid the greatest evils of war. No foreign enemy can invade and pollute our soil. Our navies can confine him to the ocean ; and thus incalculably diminish the evils of war. This single circumstance shows that our government have acted wisely in creating a navy, and in providing the means of its gradual increase. War even in its mildest form, is a most tremendous scourge. On the ocean, its evils are chiefly limited to the combatants. On the land its course is marked with ten fold horrors. The aged, the helpless ; the fond mother and her weeping infant ; fields stript of their verdure ; cities ascending in flames ; the labors of art and of science suspended ; depravity stalking abroad, and opening her mouth against the heavens ; wide wasting pestilence, famine and death ; all the monuments of skill and of glory overturned and defaced ; and the temples of the living God profaned and polluted ; the riches and toils and glory of ages, levelled in the dust and buried in ruin ; all these, the usual attendants of war, portray its horrors, and announce it the most terrific scourge with which heaven punishes the guilty nations.

In the present state of human affairs, it is vain, to expect an entire exemption from war. Its greatest evils, a kind providence has put it in our power to avoid. Let us avail ourselves of all our local advantages. Let us assiduously cultivate the arts of peace. Let us bring into activity, all the moral and physical resources and energies of our country, and render them subservient to private and public happiness. Let us learn wisdom from the errors and sufferings of other nations. Look around you ; cast your eyes over the ancient and modern world ; read their history ; it is the history of destruction and misery. The heart sighs and sinks at the gloomy retrospect. Let us hope that this

nation will form an honorable exception ; that amidst the lapse and desolation of ages, she will exhibit a bright scene on which the eye can fix with pleasure ; that her prosperity and her power will rise on the basis of justice ; that “ violence shall no more be heard in her land ; neither wasting nor destruction within her borders ; that her walls will be salvation, and her gates praise.”

Let us remember that righteousness exalteth a nation ; and that sin is a disgrace to a people. A wicked and corrupt people cannot expect to prosper. The present era, with respect to religion is truly auspicious. Never did there exist such ardor, such unanimity, such liberality in promoting truth and righteousness. The literary, humane and religious associations forming in all parts of our country cannot fail to impart a salutary influence, and to promote the increase of virtue and happiness.

Among the blessings with which God has favored this nation, that of perfect religious freedom holds a pre-eminent rank. The awful emblems of our redemption, are not profaned and prostituted to office, to wealth and power. As no one sect can domineer over another, all live in peace and harmony. In proportion as the civil power has interfered with religion, it has debased and corrupted it. Religious establishments by introducing a compulsory power, and exclusive privileges, promote hypocrisy, bigotry and worldly ambition. Such is the nature of true religion, if it exist at all, it must be free. “ God is a spirit, and those who worship, must worship in spirit.” All that human power can do is to make a show of religion. Fortunately for us, a catholic and liberal spirit appears to pervade all denominations of christians. We have reason to believe that religion, has, for some time past, been gaining ground in these United States ; and a conviction of its value and importance, has become general, especially among the higher classes of society. Nothing could be more auspicious to our government ; for a people who do not fear God, will certainly not regard man. There seems to have been a simultaneous impulse on the religious world, to make one grand contemporaneous effort, for the dissemination of truth and righteousness. We shall feel the

immense value of religion, to the welfare of society ; if we reflect that there is an indissoluble connection between sound sentiment and virtuous practice. A people who possess a deep sense of moral obligation, and of the awful sanctions of religion will not be likely to revolt against government, nor to submit to its abuse. That amiable equality which Christ enjoined on his followers, is the first principle of genuine republicanism. "Call no man on earth your master." "Let each esteem others better than himself." These two simple precepts, if universally felt and practised, would destroy all servility and pride, all envy and contention ; and would substitute a ready and active compliance in the room of stern authority and reluctant submission.

In her progress, forward, refinement and national wealth, united America, has displayed the energy and enterprise, which characterise, a free, industrious and virtuous people. In agriculture, in commerce, and in all the useful arts ; her efforts have been crowned with success. The nature of her government is such, that it gives full scope to the enterprise and zeal of all her citizens. The tide of her population is rapidly rolling towards the west and the south ; the arts and the abodes of civilized man, succeed to the gloomy forest and the wandering savage. Here a soil, more fertile than that of Egypt, expands its bosom to the cultivator's hand. Rivers more majestic than the Indus and the Nile, solicit the laboring oar, and bear on their currents the products and the reward of toil. Over these vast regions, where nature has slumbered for ages, in solitary grandeur, the American Eagle claps his wings and soaring westward, eyes the distant Pacific ; while in his beak he bears the peaceful olive, and in his talons the gleaming thunderbolt, he exults in his rapid course ; he claims the skies and the earth as his own ; and on his lofty head, presents to the heavens, the bright constellation that adorns it. When these extensive western regions shall be filled with people, the whole habitable world will have been surrounded and settled by civilized man. This event will probably occur in the seventh grand Millenary from the creation. Then the kingdoms of this world, will become the kingdoms of our Lord. All nations shall bow to his scepter, all ene-

mies shall fall under his feet. The bondage of corruption will then be dissolved, and man delivered from vanity, will rise into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. He shall no longer behold the earth withering under the blast of death, but fanned with the gales and watered with the streams of Paradise. He shall no longer tremble at the flaming cherubimic sword, but shall put forth his hand, and eat of the Tree of life, and live forever !



AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE GRADUATES
OF
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
AT
COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1794.



AN ADDRESS.

You, Gentlemen, are now stepping into the great world, where you must soon act for yourselves. The eyes and the hearts of your friends are fixed upon you. Consider, therefore attentively, the difficulties to which you may be exposed ; that if they arrive you may surmount them with courage, or bear them with resignation. The passions of youth spread a thousand unreal charms over the objects of sense and the prospects of fancy : Hence we are liable to numberless deceptions. As we behold the world decorated in ornaments, the splendid dress of imagination, we are inconsiderately hurried through a vast field of objects, in pursuit of new pleasures, which serve no other purpose than to fascinate and perplex, to allure and disappoint. Such is the ardency of our passions, such is their tendency to excess, that a reiterated succession of disgust and mortification cannot, but for a short interval, rob the objects of our pursuit of their deceitful charms, and teach us to place our affections on that alone in which true happiness is to be found. Hence appears the necessity of cultivating our reason, and of subjecting our passions to its control. The capacity of improvement forms a principal distinction between man and the

lower orders of animated nature. There is a certain degree of improvement, beyond which the constitution of their nature forbids them to proceed. Their situation is commensurate with their natures. Though the objects about which they are conversant are perishable, yet they are such as fill their capacities, and satiate their desires. But man rises above the present scene of things. Unconfined by the bound of the world, or the the flight of time, his ardent soul rushes down the long range of eternity, rolling over millions of ages, discovering new, but happy scenes of existence. As he possesses nothing here with which he is satisfied, his only happiness in this world consists in the desire and pursuit of higher attainments. His soul can be satisfied with nothing less than a reversion to God, and a complete absorption into his nature. Strive, therefore, to make great and rapid advances in knowledge and virtue, that you may excel men in those things in which men excel the brutes. Conform yourselves to those laws which God has established and revealed in the great kingdoms of Nature and Grace.

Take care of your minds, your passions and your bodies. These constitute that sphere in which God has appointed every one to exercise dominion. If this dominion be invariably supported, it will elevate man to the original glory of his nature; and by restoring that harmony which once subsisted between his internal frame and his external condition, will deluge his soul with an unceasing tide of bliss. Man, it is true, is in a fallen state; but that state is the best possible for the exercise of virtue. If no obstacles were to be removed, no difficulties to be surmounted, no enemies to be conquered; where would be magnanimity? Where would be perseverance? Where courage? If no powers of darkness to be opposed, why dress ourselves in the armour of light? Were we borne through the world on the pinions of an eagle, or did our way lay through a field of roses, heaven would lose half its charms.

If, therefore, you meet with difficulties in the subsequent periods of life, if you find yourselves pressed by the iron hand of adversity, indulge not that pusillanimity which censures because it cannot understand, and complains because it cannot alter the

allotments of infinite wisdom. Repose the highest confidence in the Supreme Being ; always believing that wisdom and goodness are concealed under the darkest veils thrown over the designs and events of his providence. Remember, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Remember, that no length of time, no distance of place, no change of circumstances, can frustrate the purpose of his will, or mar the beauty of his plan. If you are willing to be at his disposal, and to be conformed to his laws, you will find all his perfections mansions of safety and delight. But if you rebel, if you transgress, you arm heaven against yourselves.

Should any of you assume the character of a minister of the gospel, let me advise you to form your faith immediately from the sacred scriptures. Emancipate your souls from the force of prejudice, annihilate all attachments to particular systems, exalt yourselves to a noble independency of thought ; and the glories of the gospel will burst upon you in their full effulgence. Suffer men to advise you, but not to think for you. If you consult the works of men for the acquirement and establishment of your religious sentiments, you cannot do justice to yourselves till you have consulted the whole ; but before you have accomplished this, you will find yourselves embarrassed amidst ten thousand jarring schemes, and will be as much puzzled to learn divinity here as you would language at Babel. The design of revelation is to unfold to men the true God, acting according to the principles of his nature. This design is brought forward in the sacred pages. The character of the great Supreme is there portrayed with such plainness, that every unbiassed mind must understand ; and with such majesty, that every candid heart must feel. An acquaintance with your Creator, by enlivening all the sensibilities of nature, will inconceivably enhance the blessings of life ; and by inspiring you with confidence, will produce a firmness and serenity of mind, which neither the adversities of time, nor the flight of ages can destroy.

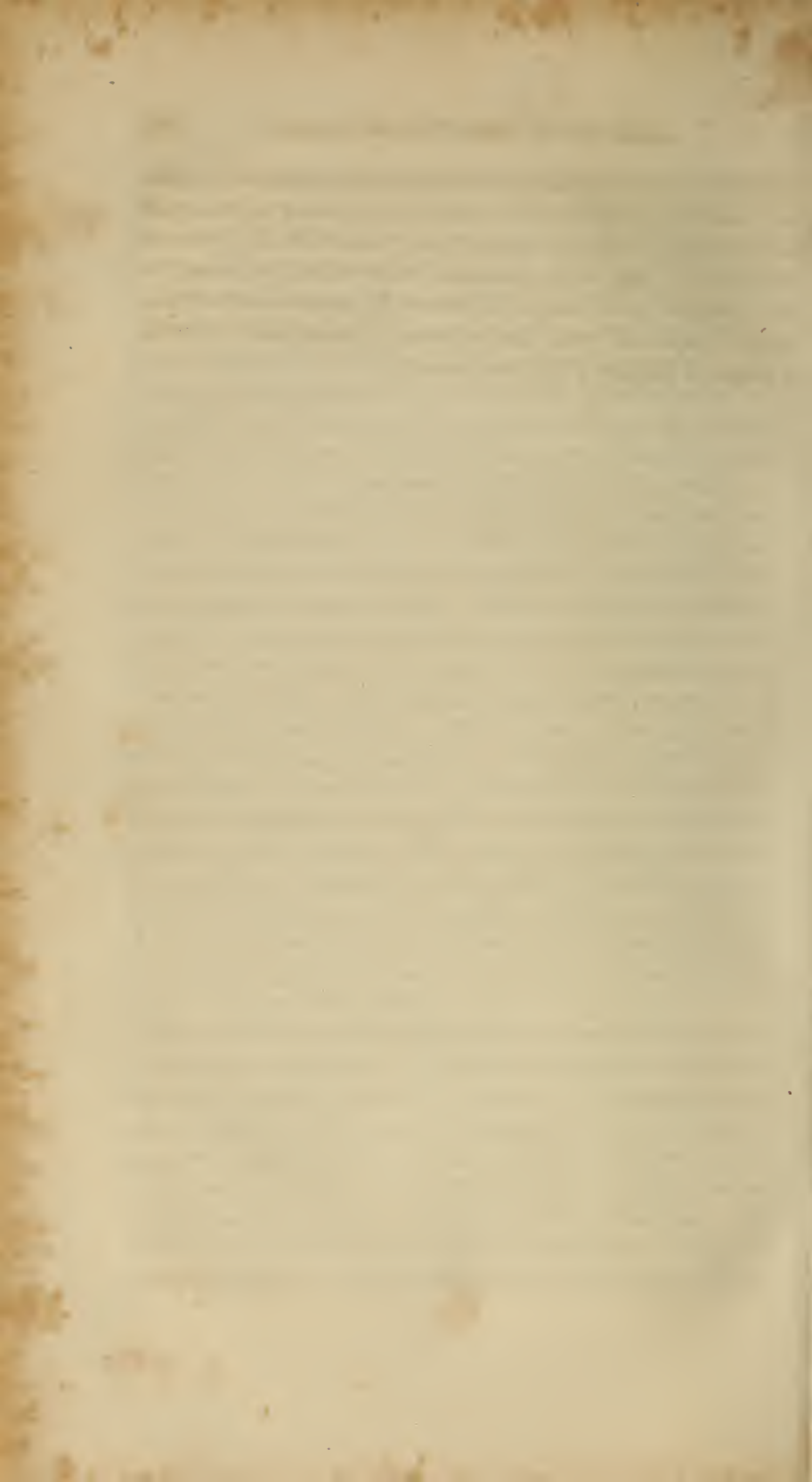
Let not the peculiarities of your religious faith confine your benevolent affections and exertions within the narrow limits of a party. Neither let a cynical moroseness, nor a fanatical zeal,

impoverish your hearts, and rob you of the elegant commerce and rational enjoyments of human life. The sour scowl of a hypocrite is as offensive to heaven as the open profanity of an infidel. The present age is the age of reason and philosophy. It knows no government but freedom, no sovereign but God. The huge fabric of ecclesiastical tyranny, long supported by gloomy superstition and blind fear, is tumbling in ruins. The beauty of true religion will not much longer be deformed by the intrusion of civil power, nor her shining mantle torn by the rash hand of persecution. The black heavens are rolling away with a great noise, and a firmament of light blazes on the world.

In all your intercourse with men, be plain, benevolent and candid. Never stoop to that mean artifice, which requires a continual effort of concealment to preserve in the minds of others an opinion of your integrity. Suffer not your feet to be decoyed from the path of rectitude, by the splendid baits of ambition, nor your hearts to be corrupted by the inconsiderate violence of party rage. Let judgment and decision in public affairs mark all your conduct. This will not only require, but it will secure esteem and confidence. He who "halts between two opinions," whose ardor for popularity rages with such violence as to suppress the suggestion of an honest, unprejudiced mind; he who prostitutes public justice to private emolument, who sacrifices his judgment to his ambition; he will become an object of contempt; and by exciting suspicions in all will secure the attention of none. Let your conduct, therefore, be always upright; that your character may appear fair and unblemished in the eyes of the public.

You, gentlemen, go from this institution, with the best wishes of its patrons and officers. You have the pleasure to reflect, that you leave behind you a fair example which has secured to you the affection and esteem of all your instructors. The diligence with which you have pursued your studies, the peculiar regard you have discovered for the laws of this college, lead us to expect and to wish the continuance of your friendship. We doubt not you will feel interested for the prosperity of the place of your education. Do not imagine that your present discon-

nection with this institution, will diminish our affection, or stifle any exertions in our power to assist you in rising to honor and respectability. May the path of your future life be luminous with virtue. May every promotion with which you meet, be the reward of merit, and be brightened by a monument of true glory. Impressed with these sentiments, Gentlemen, it is with a reluctant pleasure I bid you FAREWELL.



AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE GRADUATES
OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
AT THE ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT,
IN THE BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE
IN PROVIDENCE,
SEPTEMBER 5, 1798.



TO THE HONORABLE JOHN BROWN, ESQ.

THE following address is, with great respect for his public generosity, eminent patriotism and liberal patronage of Rhode Island College, most respectfully inscribed, by his obliged friend and very humble servant,

JONATHAN MAXCY.

Providence, September 11th, 1798.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
FROM THE FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT
BY JOHN STOW
1618

AN ADDRESS.

YOU, gentlemen, have the singular fortune to complete the course of your collegiate education at a period the most alarming and interesting that the world ever saw. Principles and conduct prevail, which threaten destruction to those institutions of religion and government, to which mankind are indebted for all the blessings of civilized life. In that part of Europe where the altar has been profaned, where the bands of society have been burst asunder, where the most endearing connexions have been exchanged for purposes of worse than brutal association—the passions have been wrought up to such a paroxysm of rage, that they have set at defiance the sacred obligations of religion and justice; have proclaimed open war against the Almighty, and covered the earth with blood and murder. There you behold tigers and wolves, in human form, sparing neither age nor sex. To them a Supreme Being is a chimera; immortality, is unconscious sleep; and future responsibility, the frightful offspring of superstition. There the hydra of despotism, riding on her iron car, gnashes her bloody jaws, and growls destruction to the world. From this horrid spectacle, turn off your eyes to your native country, where laws are regarded, where government is equally administered, where the constituted authorities are respected, where the God of heaven is worshipped; and let your full souls rise with an indignant determination to resist at

all events the intruding arm of foreign domination. When you see the pernicious effects of infidelity, atheism and unbridled ambition, learn to venerate and support those sacred institutions, which alone can render men fit subjects for moral and civil government. With a view to guard you against that irreligious, haughty and vengeful spirit, which is striving to convert the world into a vast theatre of carnage and confusion, permit me to recommend to your most serious attention the three following things, from the influence of which, I conceive, all moral improvement is derived.

First. Remember that there is a God. The belief of this truth is the only security of virtue, and the only barrier against vice. For if we say there is no God, we say there is no standard of morality. We equalize virtue and vice, or rather we say there are no such things as virtue and vice. We at once annihilate all moral obligation, and with it all restraint on the sinful propensities and headstrong passions of man. It is truly astonishing that a rational being, who can endure a moment's reflection, should be an atheist; and yet there are many who spurn at the idea of a God, and arrogantly tell you that the universe is not an effect, but a cause. Indeed if you disbelieve the existence of God, you must believe that there is no higher principle than matter. Of consequence, you must say matter is eternal, its various modifications, animate and inanimate, are the result of an inherent central and circumferential power. In this case you will gain nothing, and will lose much; for you will still be as much at a loss to account for this power and its operations, as you will be to account for the existence of an eternal, intelligent, uncaused Being. If you admit the latter, you can account for the origin of all things in a consistent manner; if you admit the former, you can never account for the existence of one atom, or for one modification of matter. Atheism is of all doctrines the most uncomfortable and gloomy. It renders all moral and intellectual acquirements useless; levels man to the brutal creation; destroys all order, design and harmony, in the universe. If acted out in its genuine effects, it would convert the world into a theatre of confusion, violence and misery. Never, therefore, forget that there is a God. Let every breath you draw, and every object you behold, remind you of this truth.

Secondly. Remember that you have souls; and that these will never cease to exist. A denial of the existence of the soul as a thing distinct from matter, and of its immortality, is a natural and necessary consequence of a denial of the existence of God. For if there is no higher principle in the universe than matter, what we call the soul is merely the result of animal organization. In this view the soul must be considered as a quality wholly dependent on a particular disposition of matter. Derange that disposition, and you destroy the soul. In this view the fate of man and brutes is the same. Both are matter, and both destroyed by decomposition. In short, the doctrine of a material soul amounts to this, man has no soul. God has so formed you, that you are obliged to rely on the veracity of your senses. If you distrust the evidence of these, or renounce it, you have no standard of certainty left. Your external senses inform you of what exists without; your internal senses, of what exists within. To doubt in either case, is to do violence to nature. You have the same kind and degree of evidence, therefore, that an operative, thinking substance exists within you—as you have, that any material body exists without you. Matter makes itself known to you by its qualities. The soul becomes acquainted with itself and its existence, by internal sense; by the knowledge it gains from without, and by its operations concerning that knowledge. The soul has as direct a perception of itself, as it has of any object whatever. To doubt, therefore, whether you have souls, is to doubt whether any thing exists. The qualities of the soul appear to be totally different from the qualities of matter. The soul can originate motion and thought; it can remember, examine, choose, refuse, reflect, judge and decide. Matter can do nothing of a similar nature. It is of itself inert. It exhibits not the most distant appearance of thought or volition. If then the qualities of matter and those of the soul are so different, there certainly is the highest reason to believe that they are substances totally different in nature. The soul appears to be a single, indivisible principle. The parts into which it has been usually divided, ought to be considered not as if they existed as parts, but as the different operations of the same self-active principle. Whether this principle will con-

tinue to exist after the dissolution of the body, cannot be ascertained without the aid of revelation. The dread which the soul has of annihilation ; its dissatisfaction in the present state ; its ardent desire after happiness ; its capacity of unlimited improvement ; the absurdity of supposing, that God would bestow powers, and destroy them as soon as they begin to energise ; the unequal fate of virtue and vice in this world ; the consideration that man answers no determinate purpose here ; these things render the separate existence of the soul highly probable. Revelation alone assures and confirms immortality to man. In the sacred pages, a distinction is clearly made and kept up between body and soul. God is stiled "the God of the spirits of all flesh." Paul speaks of "the spirits of the just made perfect." Job says, "there is a spirit in man." David says, "into thy hand I commit my spirit." Christ said to his disciples, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones." Stephen, when stoned to death, cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The Saviour certainly taught that there was a difference between spirit and matter, when he said, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." In short, if you examine the scriptures, you will find, that the inspired writers uniformly keep up this distinction on which I am insisting ; and that their faith was, that the soul would survive the dissolution of the body ; that death was not an annihilation of existence, but only a change in the mode of it. It is of the highest importance that you believe this doctrine ; for without it, you lose the influence of all those motives which give vigor and worth to human actions. If you admit the idea that your existence will terminate with the present life, your love of virtue and hatred of vice will abate ; you will resign yourselves to the blind impulse of passion, and will direct all your actions by present gratification. As you will have nothing to anticipate, the immediate impulses of your feelings, independent of all consequences, will engross your attention. Hope and fear are the strongest propensities by which man is actuated. The first is directed to the reward of virtue ; the last to the punishment of vice. If you, then, take away the prospect of immortality, you take away the chief principles on which moral motives operate, or you weaken those principles to such a de-

gree as to render them useless. A disbelief, therefore, of the soul's immortality, contravenes the constitution of nature. It is not right, therefore, to say, as some philosophers do, that every appearance in nature is against the future existence of the soul. The contrary is so far true, that you can scarcely investigate the sinful cause of any thing in this world, without taking into view its connexion with another. If you regard your own interest, or that of society, never depart from the doctrine of the soul's immortality. The consequences of a belief in the opposite doctrine are so manifestly pernicious, that you may rest assured it cannot be founded in truth.

Thirdly. Not only remember that you are immortal, but that you are accountable creatures. It is impossible for God to form a rational being, and not bind that being under moral law, so long as he shall continue to exist. This law flows from the absolute perfection and supremacy of the divine nature. When we say that God is infinitely amiable, it is the same as to say that he is to be infinitely loved. Moral obligation, therefore, arises from the nature of God ; and, like that, is immutable and eternal. Do not imagine, that any change in your state or dispositions can exempt you from a responsibility for your conduct. The mutability of creatures, can make none in God. Always remember your relation to him. A sense of this will lift you above the groveling pursuits of vice, and furnish a perpetual excitement to the cultivation of those virtues which alone can render you worthy and happy. Nothing can be more abused, nothing more pernicious in its consequences, than the sentiment that men are not amenable at the tribunal of God ; for if they are at liberty to conduct as they please, without a liability of being called to an account, it at once becomes indifferent to them what character their actions assume. In fact, a disbelief in future responsibility, is the genuine offspring of atheism ; and, like that, must excite the abhorrence of every virtuous man. Let me urge upon you the importance of the preceding sentiments, respecting the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and future responsibility. The world is more indebted to the prevalence of these three doctrines, for its order and good government, than to all other causes. These doctrines, as to

their full extent and influence, are peculiar to revelation. If you discard them, you enervate every virtuous sentiment, you undermine the foundations of society, and level the human to the brute creation. These ideas, I have reason to hope, from your past conduct, will continue to influence you in future. You are now entering on a vast, dangerous and tumultuous theatre. A scene opens for the utmost exertions of all your abilities and talents, in support of religion and liberty. Wherever Divine Providence may cast your lot, acquit yourselves like men, determined to be virtuous and free.

I now give you, gentlemen, my parting benediction, wishing you may live honored, respected and beloved in this world ; and in the next, shine like the stars in the firmament forever.

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE

BACCALAUREATE

OF

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT,

SEPTEMBER 2, 1801.



AN ADDRESS.

To you, Young Gentlemen, who are now taking your leave of this Institution, your future prosperity and promotion must be highly important and interesting. The education you have acquired, is, with most of you, the capital, with which you venture forth into the commerce of life. Let prudence, industry, and economy, be your constant attendants. Hitherto, while intrenched in the narrow limits of collegiate life, you have carried with you the ardent wishes, and engaged the tender anxieties of parental affection. You are now entering on a different scene, where you must more immediately direct and control your own conduct. Of course more anxiety will follow you ; and more honor, if you are wise and successful. Those principles and actions, which have raised others to eminence and distinction, you may expect will raise you. It is safe to follow the dictates of experience. This alone ought to be your guide in all cases which fall within its limits. You may consider human life, as you do the science of natural philosophy, in which no real and useful progress can be made without the aid of experiment. Let me advise you always to adhere to the plain dictates of common reason ; and never suffer your minds and hearts to be perverted, by that modern new-sprung light, which teaches its disciples, that every thing which has heretofore been esteemed wisdom, is folly ; that all those civil and religious institutions,

to which mankind are indebted for all their moral and intellectual improvement, are systems of fraud, founded on ignorance and supported by prejudice. The men who advocate these ideas, exclusively arrogate to themselves the pompous title of philosophers. They consider Newton, and Locke, and Bacon, and Boyle as mere children. They cannot endure such simpletons, for they were weak and credulous enough to believe there is a God. These masters of the new school, consider it as a great stigma upon their dignified independence ; as a great sin against the unalienable, sacred rights and liberties, of their " material frames ;" to receive instruction from the wisdom of past ages, or from any thing except their own unerring reason. They cannot endure the voice of history, because this relates what ought not to have happened. They consider the present race of men, as a species wholly different, from all those groveling beings, who have existed in the past ages of the world. As the nature of man is found to be wholly different from what it has always appeared to be, new models of society and government must be adopted ; for as the scene is wholly reversed, every thing which has formerly been useful, must now be pernicious. Hence the world has been filled with a thousand visionary schemes, announcing the perfectibility of man, the age of reason, the empire of philosophy, the grave of immortality and the divinity of matter. With the patrons of these schemes, it is too vulgar, to believe what has heretofore been believed. They must have something new, something altogether of their own making ; it must be wholly detached from common sense, it must be monstrous and prodigious, or it is not philosophy. Novelty to a certain class of mankind, has charms too alluring to be resisted. Hence it is that the modern apostles of moral and political destruction, obtain proselytes to rash adventure and dangerous innovation ; proselytes, who like themselves, would break up the great deep, and inundate the globe. Let me advise you, never to relinquish the maxims of experience and the plain dictates of common sense. These will be to you an ark of safety. When every thing around you is perishing in the flood, the top of Ararat will sustain you, and the dove bearing the branch of the olive, will fly to your windows.

I must in the next place guard you against a disposition to neglect the opinions which are formed concerning your conduct. Indifference to censure and applause, is the index of a heart stubborn in its own pride, and hardened by its own wickedness. He who can assume to himself so much importance, as to see no connexion between his own prosperity and the approbation of the wise and virtuous, exhibits the most striking evidence, that he is travelling in the broad road of destruction. The principle he avows and practises, is a principle of unjustifiable, savage and ferocious independence. No one can stand aloof in insulated solitude ; no one has a right to sunder the ligaments which bind him to the social body ; no one is fortified with such a mound of majesty and glory, that can need no aid and fear no danger from his fellow mortals. That barbarian pride, which disclaims all external control, and sees no value except in individual importance ; is the enemy of all domestic and public tranquility. It is the fruitful source of the most daring enormities ; tends to prostrate every useful establishment ; and if generally indulged, would convert the whole civilized world into a theatre of contention, of rapine. and murder. Be careful therefore to cultivate a decent and proper respect for the opinions that will be formed concerning your conduct ; and never allow yourselves, to believe that the established customs of society can be slighted with impunity, or subverted without destruction of every thing valuable.

I would recommend to you, never to treat with contempt and censure those who possess talents different from your own, or who profess different sentiments, provided those sentiments do not infringe the essential laws of morality, and discard the solemn injunctions of religion. There is a variety no less extensive and beautiful, in the intellectual and moral world, than in the natural. God has seen fit to bestow on different individuals, different kinds and degrees of mental and corporeal endowments. The sentiments and characters of men are originated, varied and formed, by innumerable circumstances, which appear to be merely accidental. From different associations, employments, and habits, which are all unavoidable in such a world as this, men necessarily derive some peculiarity in their

modes of thinking, reasoning and judging. Perhaps, if the differences, oppositions and inequalities in the intellectual system were destroyed, it would have no more beauty to an eye that could take it in at one view, than this earth would, if all those varieties which now render it so charming, were levelled down and blended in one common surface. The beneficent Creator has bestowed different kinds and degrees of talents on his creatures, that they might all feel their mutual connexion and dependence ; that the intellectual universe might exhibit a complete whole, in nothing deficient, nor redundant, displaying an endless succession of harmonies, neither fatiguing the mind with too much uniformity, nor perplexing it with too much variety. You should, therefore strive to ascertain the rank allotted yourselves as well as others in the great and beautiful disposition of divine providence. You will then be disposed neither to censure others for not being like yourselves, nor to find fault for not being what you are. If you see many above you, it is probable, you will always see more below you. You ought neither to envy the former, nor to despise the latter, for a little reflection will convince you, that you have infinitely more reason to be grateful for being what you are ; than to repine for not being allotted a more conspicuous station. After having ascertained the kind and degree of talents you possess, you will be able with much greater certainty, to cultivate them with success and to render them more useful to yourselves and others. The bestowments of divine providence have not made a greater difference in men, than the aids and embellishments of education. The man who possesses the greatest abilities unimproved by study and application, is a giant without skill and dexterity. A dwarf with a pebble, may level his cumbrous limbs in the dust. Whether your talents are great or small they will be of but little use without proper cultivation. No one can excel in things to which his talents are not adapted, nor is there scarcely one out of all the myriads of human nature, who cannot excel in something. The only art is, to find out what kind of capacity you possess, and to apply to such studies as are calculated to improve it. You cannot toil to advantage against nature ; but if you add proper discipline to true genius, the result will be glorious.

On this subject, I must address you in the elegant language of Cicero ;—"Cum ad naturam eximiam atque illustrem, accesserit ratio quædam conformatioque doctrinæ ; tum illud nescio quid præclarum ac singulare, solere existere." The same great and wonderful man ascribes all his abilities in eloquence to study and proper discipline. The different branches of learning bear an intimate relation not only to one another, but to the different faculties of the human mind. These different faculties in order to be cultivated must be employed in their proper provinces, and about their proper objects. Hence it is obvious that in order to excel, to be really eminent in any one branch of learning, it is necessary to be acquainted with all. But that you may render your abilities and acquirements, really useful ; that you may acquire solid glory and permanent renown, it is essential that you keep in view the great ends of all arts and sciences. These are ; to furnish the mind with information ; to give its powers their highest perfection ; to form the heart to rectitude and goodness ; and thus to enable man to discharge the duties of life in that mode which will contribute most to the general advantage of society. You will do well, in all your studies and pursuits to keep these things in your minds.

In the systems of modern education more attention seems to have been paid, to enlighten the understanding, than to meliorate the heart. This is certainly a great defect ; for eminent talents and extensive acquirements, unaccompanied with moral goodness, want that splendid attracting superiority which virtue alone can give. Neither the mind nor countenance, can be truly beautiful, unless suffused with that mild light, that ineffable resistless glory which beams from an uncorrupted heart. Man is not less elevated above other animals by his moral and religious capacity, than by his rational faculties and scientific acquirements. The moral sense with which he is endowed adds an incalculable value to his existence. Were he insensible to the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice ; were he not endowed with a consciousness that his knowledge of right and wrong inheres in an immortal principle ; he could neither enjoy the transports of divine benediction, nor ascend to the sublime contemplation of the Supreme Being. Man's taste for moral ex-

cellence lays the foundation for an endless progression in perfection and felicity. It is to this taste that the great law of God is immediately addressed, requiring of man perfect and unchanging love. Were this law universally complied with, all would be happy, because their affections would be fixed on an object possessing infinite excellence. Imperfection would be lost in improvement; sin and sorrow would cease; all hearts would bound towards the source of infinite goodness, and the whole intellectual universe would forever brighten under the eye of its Creator. Let me then beseech you not to neglect the proper exercise and cultivation of those moral powers which you have received from the hand of divine beneficence.

To this important end, I must recommend to you the most serious and careful attention to the sacred scriptures. In these alone are contained those truths and doctrines, the belief and practice of which, are essential to your highest happiness in time and eternity. Among the numerous reasons for recommending to you the scriptures, I shall on this occasion mention but two. The first is, that the scriptures alone teach the real nature of God. A belief in his existence has pervaded all nations from the remotest antiquity. This belief, however, seems not to have produced any solid advantage to mankind, since it left them wholly ignorant of the nature of God. When philosophers began to reason concerning the divinity they all agreed, except a few, as to his existence, but as to his nature disagreed with each other no less than with truth. Their utmost researches added nothing to what had already been believed. So true is it, that "the world by wisdom knew not God." This single circumstance is sufficient to evince to an unprejudiced mind the necessity and propriety of a supernatural revelation. To the researches of the ancient philosophers respecting the Supreme Being, the deists of modern times have added nothing valuable, except what they have derived from that revelation which they profess to reject. While they are ignorant, as all must necessarily be, of the moral perfections of God, while destitute of revelation, they can ascertain no immutable law of conduct for rational creatures, nor can they exhibit any definite motives to excite to the practice of virtue. Of course pure deism as to the

high end of man's existence, has very little advantage over atheism ; perhaps it has none ; for though it admits a God, it cannot tell what he is ; it cannot explain his nature. This cannot be much superior to that scheme which admits no God, and of course cannot explain any thing. The truth is, none but God could know his own perfections and designs, and none but he could disclose them. In the great and splendid fabric of the universe, God has hung out the ensigns of his infinite wisdom and power ; but he has not here exhibited those perfections which it is most essential for man to know. The light of nature does not afford sufficient knowledge to guide mankind to happiness, nor does it present a mode of instruction adapted to their state and capacity. The great body of mankind, never contemplate the causes and principles of things ; they never examine the mechanism, order and harmony of the universe. To gain from these any considerable knowledge of God, requires time, application, much study and great talents. This is evident from the consideration, that so few of the ancient philosophers, though possessed of superior genius, acquired any tolerable notions concerning the Deity. The light of nature, or what is called natural religion, wholly fails in the knowledge of those things most essential to man. Did any one ever discover from the works of creation, the nature of sin and holiness ; the nature of acceptable worship ; the certainty of a future state of rewards for the righteous, and punishments for the wicked ? Did any one ever discover from the works of creation the divine placability, that God could consistently pardon sin, and that he would actually do it, on any conditions ? In these respects the light of nature is "darkness visible." We can conceive of no way except by a direct revelation, in which we can know the moral perfections of God ; the dispositions of his mind, and his determinations concerning sinful beings. To know these things is surely of the highest importance ; and these are no where to be known except from the scriptures. A child, by reading these a few hours, can obtain more knowledge of the true God, than the numerous phalanx of heathen philosophers, did during their whole lives. I am persuaded, young gentlemen, if you consider this subject attentively, you must admit the propriety and ne-

cessity of revelation, and must acknowledge the excellency of that contained in the bible. Here is a religion, plain, intelligible in all its practical truths, accommodated to all classes of mankind, to every capacity, revealing the true God not only to the intellect, but to the heart. What would have been the language and conduct of Socrates and Cicero, if in the midst of their anxious researches after God, they had suddenly been favored with the bible? They would have clasped it to their hearts and wet it with their tears. Like Archimedes, when he discovered a geometrical truth, they would have run into the streets of Athens and Rome, exclaiming with gratitude and joy, "I have found it! I have found it!"—I am persuaded, you can neither be willing to live nor die without the knowledge of the true God; and I am equally persuaded that you can obtain this knowledge no where except in the scriptures.

The second reason why I would recommend to you the scriptures, is that they alone inform us in what man's highest good, or happiness consists. This was one of the great points that was agitated in the schools of ancient philosophy. Daily experience evinced that man not only possessed an invincible aversion to misery, but an inextinguishable ardor for happiness. To guard him against incessant confusion, errors and crimes, it seemed of the highest importance, to direct all his desires and exertions, towards certain objects capable of affording him gratification and enjoyment. Hence opened a vast field for philosophic research and investigation. Ample opportunity was afforded, for the exercise of the human mind in discovering the greatest good, and pointing out the method in which it could be attained. How ineffectual the exertions and researches of the philosophers, were, is very apparent from the single circumstance that they placed man's highest happiness in nothing beyond the present life. Unassisted by revelation they knew not the rewards of virtue, nor the transports of immortal existence. They in general held it as a principle that the supreme good consisted in living according to nature, though their explanations of this principle were widely different. To live according to nature, as the Epicureans explained it, was to live in pleasure; as the Stoics and Peripateticks explained it, it was to possess and

practise virtue, though they seem not to have known in what true virtue consisted. Their wise man, was their virtuous man, and their virtuous man, was their happy man. This same man whom they would style a Sage, they represented as perfect, unmoved by the calamities of life, void of sympathy, pity and compassion. In short he was destitute of every quality which constitutes a really good man. Their scheme, like that of the Epicureans, was pregnant with ruin. The first, destroyed nature by too much severity; the last, by too much indulgence. Man in his present fallen state unassisted by revelation, is ignorant of the supreme good. Of course he is guided by no fixed principle, and is carried forward to no determinate end. He wanders like a bewildered traveller amidst a thousand objects which allure and dissappoint him. Mistaking the means for the end, he grasps with avidity the small portions of good attached to sensible objects, and bounds all his happiness by the limits of the present world. How surprising it is, that men even in the present day should assert the sufficiency of the light of nature, though experience has always evinced it to be insufficient! How surprising that reason should be held up as an unerring guide, when it has left the wisest of mortals in utter uncertainty, as to the true God, and the highest happiness of man! That may be defined the supreme good, on which all other good depends. Of course man's highest happiness is no where to be found but in God; in a resemblance and participation of the divine nature. For the mode in which men are enriched with these blessings, I must refer you to the sacred pages. You will there behold the divine life, assuming the empire of the heart; fixing it on God; controlling and purifying its affections; filling it with celestial tranquility; inspiring it with the animating hope of deliverance from evil; and finally instating it in the mansions of eternal beatitude. Divine revelation presents to the soul, an object in every respect adequate to its most ardent desires after happiness. Infinite amiableness, worth and excellence forever inhere in the supreme God; and when properly viewed, acknowledged and loved; fire the heart with a rapture which neither the misfortunes of life, nor the terrors of death can extinguish.

Suffer me, Young gentlemen, in the close of this address to solicit your attention to the sacred scriptures, remembering that they alone reveal to you the true God, and prescribe the only mode, in which you can rationally expect eternal felicity. Let it not be to you "condemnation that light has come into the world," but gratefully receive it and follow its brightness. It will present to you a most intimate and interesting connexion between the present and future world. It will guide your feet in the paths of peace ; it will teach you to derive all the importance of time from eternity ; it will dart its effulgence through the gloomy vale of death and display to your astonished view, the celestial Paradise blooming and brightening under the smiles of infinite love. While you look forward to that glorious state, be careful to make the precepts of the christian religion, the rules of your conduct. You will then travel on through life without guilt, and through death without fear. It is safe to trust in a religion which has triumphed as christianity has, over the most violent and powerful enemies. The arrows of infidelity and the swords of despotic power have been blunted against her adamant shield. The sinews which hurled the former and wielded the latter have been crumbled ; and the wounds they inflicted have called down the vengeance of Heaven. Remember then, that you trust to a religion, which has sustained thousands, in the greatest dangers, in the darkest scenes of adversity ; and has borne them in triumph from the most tremendous conflicts.

I must now, Gentlemen, part with you. Be assured that I shall always reflect with pleasure on the honorable manner, in which you have acquitted yourselves in this College ; and I cannot but persuade myself that you will continue to cherish and respect the principles and science of morality and religion, which you have here imbibed. With a heart filled with parental affection, I request you to accept my most ardent wishes for your prosperity. Nothing will give me more real satisfaction, than to see you rise and shine among the brightest stars in the firmament. May you be favored with health, with peace and plenty ; may you obtain honor, reputation, fame, solid glory and immortal renown. May your lives be a catalogue of patri-

otic, beneficent, generous, magnanimous actions ; may you increase in knowledge, in virtue ; in benevolence to man and in piety to God ; till you are prepared for the splendors of immortality ; till you are assured " that your names are written in heaven," and can behold them brightening in the margin of Eternity—Actuated with these sentiments, Gentlemen, I now bid you Farewell.



AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE GRADUATES
OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
AT THE
PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 1, 1802.

I beg leave to apologize to the public for the appearance of this unfinished performance. The state of my health was such at the time in which I was obliged to compose it, that I was not able to collect and arrange the parts of it as I intended. The earnest solicitation of my former pupils, has compelled me to consent to its publication as it is. If it shall be of any use to them, I shall be satisfied.

J. M.

AN ADDRESS.

IN addressing you, Young Gentlemen, on this occasion, I am impelled not by the force of custom only, but by inclination, and a desire for your prosperity. As you have now completed the course of your collegiate education, you are doubtless filled with no small anxiety, as to the business you are to pursue in life. That you make a right choice in this respect, is of the highest consequence to your welfare and happiness. For if you engage in pursuits, to which you are not strongly attached or to which your abilities are not peculiarly fitted you cannot expect to prosper. You ought therefore particularly to consider your natural inclination, your acquirements and talents. To excel in a learned profession, you must not only love it, but you must admire it. You must prefer it with a partiality which borders on enthusiasm. None but voluntary worshippers can obtain a place in the temple of fame.

You have now arrived at a most important period in life; a period in which you must begin to reduce scientific acquirement to practical wisdom. The former is the result of study and attention; the latter of skill in moral adjustment and proportion. By the former, you become learned; and by the latter prudent. Both must unite in the formation of a character great and useful. Study and abstract speculation give the mind a range too uncircumscribed, and a direction too indefinite; and of course, before they can be really useful, must be modelled and limited

by observation and practice. You will find that many things, which in theory appear consistent and beautiful, will when brought to the test of experiment appear disjointed and deformed. A mere philosopher, a thorough-bred metaphysician, is of all characters the least qualified to judge of human affairs ; to organize and bring into operation, extensive plans of utility. He is at the same time of all characters the most tenacious of his own opinions, because to his own mind, they are speculatively true ; whereas to a plain practical man they are down-right falsities. Berkley could philosophize himself into a belief of the non-existence of matter, though he would shrink at a blow from the spit of his ancient master. Hume could so completely abscond from common sense ; he could so far retire into the barren solitudes of metaphysics as to believe that he had neither body nor mind ; And yet with all his philosophy, he was obliged to eat and drink and sleep like other men. Abstract studies pursued beyond a certain limit appear to produce a kind of mental insanity ; and instead of aiding the great end of learning, the perfection of nature, accomplish its destruction. Let me advise you to pursue that method and kind of study, which experience has proved most useful. For it is by this alone that the value of all learning must be ascertained. "Letters," says Lord Bacon, "do not sufficiently teach their own use ;" but this is a wisdom beyond and above them, gained by observation. It is natural and reasonable to believe that those studies which men of genius taste and erudition have cultivated and admired, ought to claim a large portion of your attention. Though many of the moderns have been disposed to discard the study of ancient languages ; yet the beneficial effects of these have been so conspicuous in the greatest statesmen, orators, poets, and theologians ; that we ought unquestionably to retain them and hold them as an important and essential part of education : Scarcely can you find an eminent man in modern times, who has not formed his genius, and acquired his taste and talents for executing works of immortal renown by a thorough study of the Greek and Roman classics. This circumstance ought to have great weight with every young man who wishes to become eminently distinguished. It is objected that we have translations of the most valuable writers. It may

also be said that we have Washington and Franklin in wax ; but we must remember that the great men are not here ; we do not here behold the saviour of his country nor the subduer of the skies. No study is so well calculated to bring forward and invigorate the powers of youth as the study of languages. This is a constant exercise of their invention, memory and judgment, and is better accommodated to their capacities than any other. The habit of attention, and the mental energy, which are acquired in the study of ancient languages, are of the highest importance. In these youth are obliged to apply and be industrious, or they cannot succeed. They will get that thoroughly for which they are obliged to labor, and will never forget it. I believe Dr. Blair's observation is true, " that learning and good taste will flourish or decline, as the learned languages are cultivated or neglected." I would recommend to you the farther study of these in the best authors ; not that their ideas are more just or their learning more profound than those of many moderns, but because from them you will imbibe the spirit of true genius, and habituate yourselves to their superior elegance and beauty. Of course when you attempt to perform works of genius, the fire of ancient times will kindle within you. The spirit of Homer and Demosthenes, of Cicero and Virgil, will thrill through every fibre of the soul. These Sons of Minerva, will rise from the dead, and appear in bodies new and incorruptible. It is no small recommendation to the ancient languages, that those who have been most thoroughly acquainted with them, have generally been most eminent in other branches of learning.

You ought by no means to think of relinquishing the study of the arts and sciences merely because you have passed through the usual collegiate course ; or because your labors are chiefly to be employed in one profession. What you have already obtained, is merely to enable you to pursue farther and to greater advantage. One of the most difficult and at the same time most important acquirements, is a habit of attention, a power to command, arrange and connect your thoughts. This habit, however, may be induced by proper discipline. For this purpose mathematical studies are recommended. They possess

this peculiar and distinguishing property, that they exclude all operations of imagination. They are definite, closely connected in all their parts; and bend the mind to truth by rigid demonstration. The habit of attention and acuteness which you acquire in mathematical science, will accompany you in your other literary labors, and manifest itself in the productions of your own genius.

If you design yourselves for any of the learned professions, you ought particularly to cultivate Logic and Rhetoric. These will prepare you for the field of contention. They will enable you to discipline your powers; to call forth all your resources, and to display them to the greatest advantage. Logic will enable you to convince, and Rhetoric, to persuade. The first is subservient to the understanding, the latter to the imagination. As Rhetoric is employed in forming agreeable images and raising pleasant emotions with a view to impress truth more forcibly on the mind, the study of this is generally preferred by the young to the study of Logic. The last however, forms a very valuable part of a learned education; and will be rendered more interesting if it is preceded by that branch of Metaphysics which relates to the philosophy of the human mind.

In the next place, if you wish to become capable of deep research and accurate investigation, you must apply to the study of natural philosophy. This noble science will teach you to explain the various phenomena of nature, by resolving them into the operations of original and universal laws. The seeming irregularities and disjointed appearances in the material system, stimulate curiosity to discover their hidden connections. The mind from its tendency to order and systematic arrangement, proceeds with pleasure in resolving particular facts into general principles; ascertains the connections between these, until it renders the theatre of nature a coherent and magnificent spectacle. Here the philosophical enquirer becomes disembarassed of vulgar prejudices; feels his mind invigorated and enlarged; beholds order and harmony springing out of apparent confusion; and while he traces the final causes of things, is lead with gratitude and wonder to the great efficient cause of all. Natural philosophy rightly pursued is Theology, and will prove one of

the best helps to interpret divine revelation. This science of course is of vast importance because it respects you as rational and religious beings.

Another branch of learning which I would recommend to your particular attention is *Criticism*. This respects all the productions of genius in the fine arts and teaches you to distinguish what is defective, what is decent and proper, grand, sublime and beautiful. Some have supposed that there is no invariable standard of taste, and that criticism is left to fluctuate with the caprice of every individual. If this is the case how has it happened that certain productions of genius, have in every age and nation excited universal applause and admiration? How has it happened that all are pleased with the fine arts, if there are not certain fixed principles in human nature to which those arts apply, and with which they accord? Why are we pleased with a certain degree of order and connection, of uniformity and variety, unless it is that these control, direct and influence within certain limits the train of perceptions and ideas in our own minds? True criticism is undoubtedly a rational science, founded on principles in the nature of man. These principles, so far as they respect the sensitive branch of our nature coincide with those which govern in morals. He who studies criticism as a science, will observe the same refined and correct feelings springing up within him, as he observes excited and required by the precepts of moral philosophy. If in tracing the connection between the fine arts and those feelings which are excited through the eye and ear, we accustom ourselves, to distinguish what is beautiful and what deformed, what is proper and what is improper, we shall naturally transfer the same taste and the same habit into our researches concerning the propriety or impropriety of human actions. Hence the science of criticism is of vast importance as a support to morality, independent of the ornament and splendor which it enables true genius to display. When you can assign a reason for the pleasure you derive from the fine arts, your enjoyment is doubled; because you experience the combined pleasures of judgment and sensibility. Hence Criticism occupies a middle station between the higher senses and the intellect. It unites sentiment and reason; enlivens and improves both.

Another science, which occupies an higher station and which I would earnestly recommend to your attention, is, *Ethics*. The great end of this science is to bring all our affections and actions into subjection to the dictates of reason and the injunctions of revelation. To accomplish this, it unfolds the ground, the nature and extent of moral obligation ; points out the nature of virtue and vice ; ascertains the duties we owe to God, to ourselves and to our fellow-men in all the relations of solitude, domestic life, political and religious society. The habit of studying and investigating those things which respect you as moral accountable agents, will inspire you with an high sense of decency and propriety, which will add splendor to all your literary acquirements, and give a right direction to all your faculties. In your researches into moral philosophy, be careful not to depart from the principles of your own nature, for moral rules not conformable to these are impracticable, and of course useless. In Ethics metaphysical speculations are of no consequence. They are tenants for life in the clouds ; and cannot like the philosophy of Socrates be brought down from heaven and established in cities and families. The consideration of your own powers and talents compared with your situation, must suggest the rule of duty and point out the force of obligation. We are so constituted that the moral sense accompanies reason in all its disquisitions about right and wrong, about virtue and vice. Though moral obligation is imposed on all rational beings, by the standard of all perfection, yet this obligation can never exceed their ability to perform. God can never require impossibilities of his creatures. The instant we perceive that an injunction exceeds our capacity, we pronounce it unreasonable and become discouraged. A mole cannot be censured for not taking in the universe with its eye ; nor a gnat for not shading the orbit of Saturn with its wing. Man is neither so great nor so small as some have supposed him. He can neither comprehend infinity, nor does he sink below nothing. He has intellect and will, but he is limited within a certain sphere. His duty so far as reason can go is to be deduced from a consideration of his powers, from fact and experiment.

The next science which I would recommend to your particular

attention is Theology. This of all others is most important. It embraces your highest interests in life, in death, and in eternity. The sciences, I have already mentioned, seem calculated, by furnishing you with knowledge and mental energy, to give you a distinguished rank among men. Theology by inspiring you with just sentiments of Deity, will ally you to all his perfections, and give you assurance of an eternal inheritance in his kingdom. This exalted science, unfolds the existence, perfections, providence, laws, designs and works of God. It teaches you what you must believe and what you must practice, to secure the divine approbation, and obtain eternal felicity. Theology deduces moral obligation from the absolute perfection of God, and enjoins the performance of duties by motives drawn from eternity. Human philosophy cannot stretch out an arm to support and conduct you beyond the limits of time. It exhibits you acting for a few moments on a narrow stage, and then loses sight of you forever. But divine philosophy exhibits you, while in this world as in the embryo of your existence ; and while it announces to you that you must dissolve and die, assures you by the most impressive proofs that, you shall rise to a state incorruptible and interminable. The value and importance of man are no where seen but in the light of eternity. Here you behold him, moving forward in rapid progression ; enlarging in capacity, and forever approximating the source of infinite perfection.

I must recommend these things to your consideration, hoping that they will engage you in a vigorous pursuit of human and divine knowledge. The limits prescribed me on this occasion forbids me to enlarge. Before I part with you, I feel it my duty to declare in this public manner, that your moral conduct and literary proficiency, have excited sentiments of the highest esteem and most cordial friendship in the hearts of those who have had the care of your education. May you rapidly progress in knowledge and virtue. Remember at all times that you are in the hand of God ; that you are accountable to him for your conduct ; that your characters are forming for eternity, and that its joys or woes, must be your portion. Impressed with anxious solicitude for your prosperity, I now, Gentlemen, bid you Farewell !

AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE
BACCALAUREATE

OF THE
SOUTH-CAROLINA COLLEGE,

DECEMBER 2, 1816.

STANDARD

THE STANDARD

OF THE

AN ADDRESS.

To you, young gentlemen, the present, is perhaps, the most important period of life. You are now about to commence a new career; to engage in new pursuits; to display yourselves on the great theatre of the world; to bring into exercise the powers and the virtues which you have cultivated; and to convert to private and public use, the learning and talents which you have acquired in the shades of retirement. On the determinations which you now make, and the plans of conduct which you now adopt, depend your future prosperity and honor; or your ill fortune and disgrace. On your enlargement from the restraints and discipline of collegiate life, some of you are filled with joyous hopes, others with anxious fears, and all I presume with an honorable ambition. On you are fixed the eyes and the hearts of your parents and friends. From you they hope and expect much. And did they not from experience know the dangers to which you are exposed; did they not know the real evils of life, their pleasure on this occasion would be free from intruding anxiety; their pleasing anticipations of your future glory, would fill their minds with enchanting visions, and their hopes strong and free, would spring and smile, like a morning without clouds.—But alas, they know that there is no unmixed good in this world; that all things here exist by opposition and

correspondence ; that wherever there is good, there is evil ; wherever there is safety, there is danger ; wherever there is hope, there is fear ; in short, that human life is a feverish dream of honor and shame, of joy and sorrow ; a compound of lawless ambition and brutal violence ; that in all nations, force ultimately triumphs over justice ; liberty sinks into the gulf of tyranny ; that innocence is no security ; that virtue and learning, philosophy and eloquence ; all the glory and all the dignity of man, must at last bow to the sword of a Cæsar, or a Bonaparte ; that such is the mixture of moral and physical ill, in all parts of nature, and in all human affairs, that after a certain period, evil begins to predominate over good ; death gains upon life ; ruin follows ruin, till the majesty of virtue is forgotten ; the splendor of genius extinguished ; the most sacred laws trampled under foot ; man degraded to a slave ; all the monuments of his art and skill defaced ; all his lofty intellectual and moral endowments sunk, degraded and lost in barbarism. But you must learn not to despair. But as human life is, evil does not on the whole predominate. A virtuous, wise and courageous man, will find much to hope for, and much to enjoy. Conscious of his own rectitude, he will possess peace within, and the light of immortality will dispel the horrors with which he is surrounded. You will do well to remember, that the present world is a state of discipline, where you must struggle with adversity, to invigorate your virtue ; where God has intermingled various degrees of pleasure and pain, of good and evil, that finding nothing here to satisfy the immortal mind, you might elevate your affections and hopes to a state of pure and imperishable joys. To act conscientiously, or as you are convinced is right, is a rule of universal application, and is in its nature calculated to produce happiness. A rational and moral agent cannot exist independent of a law which prescribes and enforces his duty. Right and wrong are wholly relative. They refer to a law which we consider as a standard of rectitude. This makes the eternal difference between right and wrong, good and evil.

The idea of a law, implies that of a law-giver, possessed of a right flowing from his own excellence, and underived supremacy to prescribe laws to all inferior dependent beings ; and who has

power to enforce those laws by adequate sanctions. Man is the only animal on this globe who has the power of governing himself by law, and when he does this, he is a moral agent ;—that is, he acts from respect to a law whose obligatory power he recognizes. The morality of his actions consists in their relation to this law ; and this relation is the only foundation of moral good and evil. The tendency of all the laws which God has established is to universal and perfect happiness. This would certainly be the result, were the requisitions of these laws fully complied with. The misery of man arises from his abuse of his moral liberty ; from his voluntary disconformity to the will of his Creator. This is the true origin of all the evil and misery that ever did, or ever will exist. The truth of this is apparent from the single consideration, that in a being wholly conformed to God, there can no more exist sin or misery than in God himself. You are so constituted that you cannot remain indifferent to human actions. When you perceive these to be conformed to the rule of right, a sense of approbation rises up in the mind ; when disconformed, of disapprobation. In both cases, you exercise moral sense. Be not deceived therefore by imagining that conscience or moral sense is the creature of education, a mere adventitious acquisition. God has not rested the virtue and happiness of his rational creatures, on so uncertain a foundation. Conscience is as much an original power of our nature as the understanding ; though it does not, like the understanding, act alone in any instance. The operations of intellect must always precede ; for unless you know that there are such things as law and obligation, you can have no perception of right and wrong, of merit or demerit, and of course no exercise of moral sense. All our powers are evolved in a certain order ; exercised in their proper spheres, and in their peculiar relations and dependencies. The operations of moral sense, though in order subsequent to those of intellect, are wholly different from them. If the operations of intellect prove it to be an original power of the mind, the operations of moral sense equally prove it to be an original power of the mind. You will perceive therefore that virtue is not left unsupported ! that it is not left doubtful as to its motive, its nature or its end. You carry in yourselves the

incitement, the rule and the reward. By admitting that the moral sense springs up from the original frame of your nature, you cannot avoid the obligation of doing right ; nor the censure and misery of doing wrong. If you would then possess an approving conscience, take care to inform yourselves what is right ; to know the nature and extent of your obligations and duties. If you strictly adhere to these you will be virtuous ; and in proportion as you are virtuous, God has ordained that you shall be happy. You are not bound down by an invincible law of nature to be virtuous, because God has given you power to become vicious and miserable. In short your power to do wrong, is the same as your power to do right. In both cases the good or ill use of this power is left to your own choice. Remember then, that your own virtue, respectability, happiness and fame depend on yourselves. Never leave to accident or an imaginary fatality, what God has put in your power. Honor and virtue drop not from the clouds ; the winds will not bring you bread ; nor will the earth reach out a sceptre to you hand. God offers you his bounty, but leaves the improvement of it to yourselves.

You have every motive therefore, to excite you to the most vigorous exertion of all your powers, to know and discharge your duties. These relate to God, to yourselves, and to your fellow men. All your relations involve duties ; and the importance of the latter, is in proportion to the intimacy of the former. Of course your duties to your Creator demand your first and highest regard. From him you have derived your being ; on him you are wholly dependent ; and to him you are amenable. The full homage of the heart, while it is justly due to him, lays the only foundation of true virtue, and constitutes the only guarantee of your other duties. If you know, and love, and fear God, you will pay all suitable respect to yourselves and to your fellow men ; and you will in all things act conscientiously. This alone will give you stability in principle, energy in action, and dignity in character. Consider not, as is frequently done, the service of God as a wearisome burden. It is the highest glory and privilege of all intelligent beings. The laws of God are all just ; his requirements all reasonable, suitable to your state and capacity, and directly conducive to your happiness. He acts

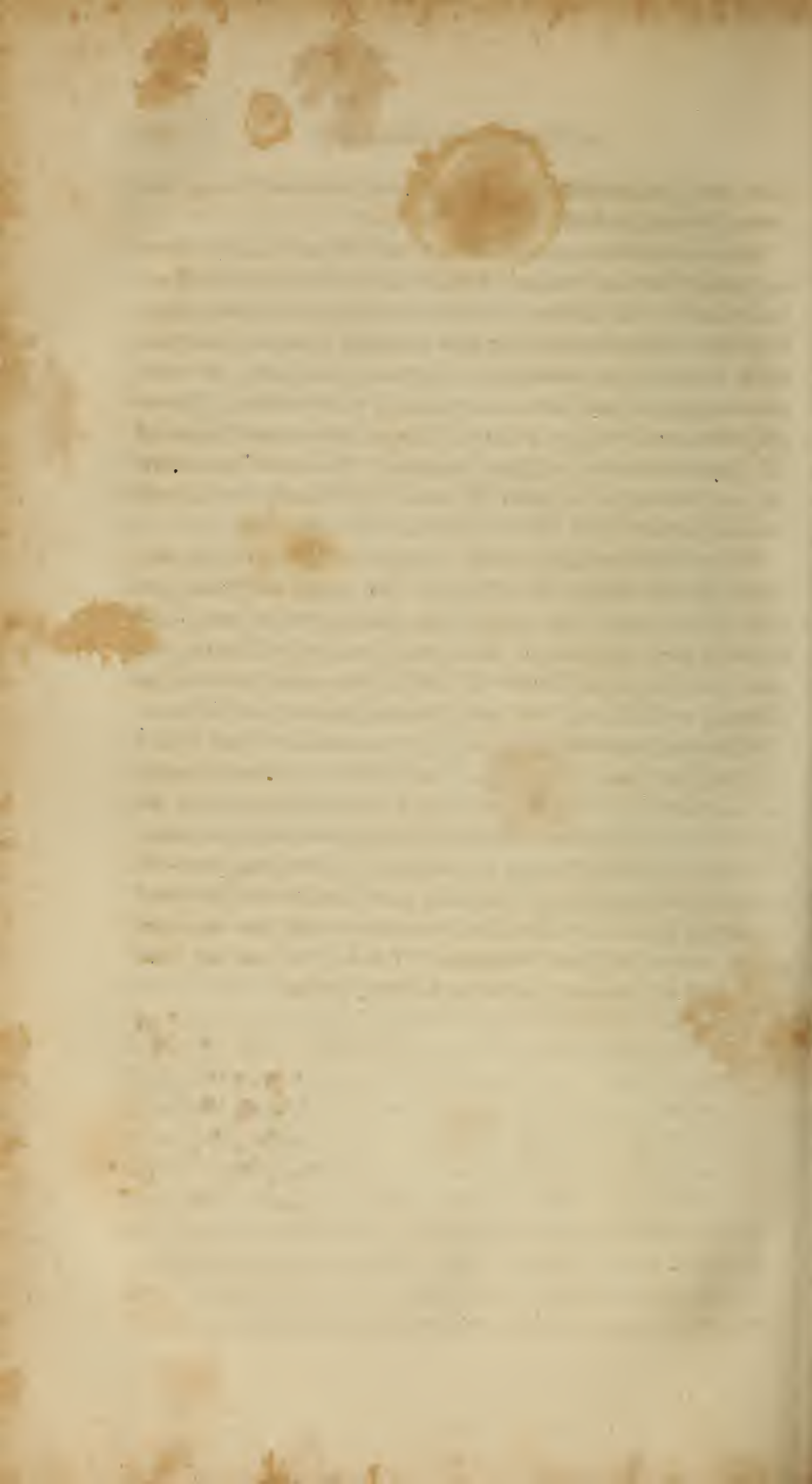
from no necessity towards you. He needs neither your love nor your service ; for these can add nothing to an infinite being. All he desires is your happiness ; and this he pursues by all means consistent with your natures as free accountable creatures. The true happiness of an intelligent being springs from virtue, and virtue from freedom. Hence it is evident that omnipotence itself cannot make you happy by arbitrary irresistible force ; for this would destroy your moral agency, and convert you into brutes or machines. Your happiness, and that of all rational accountable beings, is the happiness of free will. Choose therefore the service of God ; conform your actions to his laws ; yield up your affections wholly to him ; for every thing appertaining to this world will ultimately leave you wretched. When a due reverence for the Supreme Being is established in the heart, the empire of virtue will be secured ; because, you will then consider all the relative duties of life, as duties to God. In a life of virtue the greatest victory to be obtained, is over yourselves. The heart of man, the seat of all his appetites and passions, is the source of all his vices and crimes, and of most of his errors. Reason and conscience were designed for his governors ; but in his present fallen state the authority of these is opposed, and not unfrequently wholly renounced. The soul loses its freedom, with its peace, and sinks into the dreadful empire of death. If you would preserve yourselves from this deplorable state, stifle the first suggestion of evil ; resist the first approach of temptation ; keep your hearts with all diligence. Thus acting, you will be masters of yourselves. You will be able to cultivate with success every personal virtue ; and to acquire every useful and amiable accomplishment. Though the rule of right applies as directly to the duties owing to ourselves and to our fellow men, as to those owing to God, yet it somehow happens that most men are disposed to disregard their own personal, more than their relative obligations, especially those which involve the duties of self-denial. This is a great and dangerous error ; for no man can injure himself by vice or neglect without directly or remotely injuring others. You are as much responsible for the influence of your example on others, as for the ill effects of your actions on yourselves. Remember that personal virtue is the

foundation of all real worth ; of all true dignity of character ; of all genuine piety to God ; and of the most extensive usefulness to mankind. In proportion as a man becomes vicious, he renders himself incapable of doing good ; destroys his own peace, and that of others ; perverts the noble end of his being ; soils every shining quality ; and degrades every intellectual and moral endowment. The danger of immoral example arises chiefly from wrong notions of true happiness, and from want of reflection and due consideration. Vice, if properly seen, cannot like virtue spread on the principle of sympathetic association. A rational, sensitive being, cannot deliberately choose misery. If you examine the laws and principles which God has established in your nature ; if you compare these with the injunctions of his revealed will, you will perceive a wonderful coincidence ; and all your inquiries, if impartially conducted, will result in the firm conviction, that every motive is in favor of virtue and against vice ; that the last is only another name for pain, disgrace and misery ; the former for pleasure, honor and happiness. Never imagine that you can evade or violate with impunity, the laws of your nature. God has in all things connected your duty with your happiness. The relations which you sustain towards others, involve numerous and important obligations. These result from the common principles and reciprocal wants of your nature, and from the laws of political society. Here opens the principal field for the display of those virtues, talents and qualifications which benefit mankind ; which conciliate their esteem, secure their friendship, and excite their admiration. Be cautious therefore that you honorably discharge the obligations resulting from the social state. Much of the happiness of your lives will depend on the good will of those around you. This will be most effectually secured by a conscientious discharge of your duties ; in rendering exact justice to all men ; in paying all due respect to your superiors ; in kindness and condescension to your inferiors ; in civility and politeness to your equals ; in liberality to the poor and distressed ; in supporting all institutions for the relief of human misery and for the increase of human happiness. Thus by acting in all the relations of life according to the rule of right, you will satisfy your own consciences ; you will promote

your own respectability and usefulness; you will secure the esteem of men, and the friendship of God.

As it is your lot to come forward into life at a most interesting period, let your conduct be marked with the most disinterested love of your country. Avoid the contagion of party spirit. Exercise a noble and independent liberality towards those who differ from you in sentiment. Cultivate peace with all men, and support the laws and constitution of your country. I trust and believe that you go from this college with a deep sense of the value of civil and religious freedom. To behold you exerting your talents in support of these, will afford the highest pleasure to those who have conducted your education.

The prompt obedience which you have rendered to the authority of this college; the diligence with which you have pursued your studies; the civility and decency which have characterised your deportment; have greatly contributed to the good order and regular discipline of this college; and have set an example, which I hope will long be remembered and followed. Though many individuals among your predecessors have held a high rank in literary distinction; yet when I consider the number and talents of the present class, I must pronounce you the lights of this Institution. Permit me to express on this occasion the high satisfaction which I experience in crowning you with the laurels of this college. May they grow and flourish for ever! Departing from this institution, you carry with you my most ardent desires for your happiness. I now give you my final adieu, and recommend you to the blessing of God.



AN
ORATION
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
PROVIDENCE ASSOCIATION
OF
MECHANICS AND MANUFACTURERS,
AT THEIR
ANNUAL ELECTION,
APRIL 13, 1795.

*At the annual meeting of the Providence Association of
Mechanics and Manufacturers, April, 13, 1795.*

VOTED unanimously, That Messrs. William Richmond, Samuel Thurber, and Bennett Wheeler, be and they are hereby appointed a committee to wait on the Rev. President Maxcy, and present him the thanks of this Association, for the very entertaining and suitable oration delivered before them this day, and request of him a copy for the press.

A true copy from the journals :

Attest,

G. ALLEN, *Sec'ry.*

To the respectable Association, at whose request
the following oration is published, it is inscribed,

By their very

humble servant,

J. MAXCY.

Providence, April 15, 1795.

AN ORATION.

THE progress of man from barbarous to civilized life, is distinguished by no circumstances more important than the invention and improvement of useful arts. These, however, in the present improved state of society, have become so common, and their advantages so familiar, that, like the uninterrupted succession of divine favors, they are commonly passed by unnoticed. The recitals of battles, victories and triumphs, which engross so great a part of history, dazzle the imagination, excite the passions, and by perverting the judgment, force a tribute of applause to those heroes whose actions dispassionate reason detests. Let us for a moment suppress the emotions excited by efforts of valor; let us look at the great family of men, and ask them who are their benefactors. Are they heroes? Are these the authors of all their civilization and all their useful conveniences in life? No—they have desolated our fields, they have butchered our ancestors, they have buried our plains in blood. They multiplied the miseries of their cotemporaries; they left to their posterity examples of brutal ferocity and insatiable ambition. But the inventors and improvers of arts meliorated the condition of society; they converted the materials and subjected the elements of nature to its uses; they established it on a permanent foundation, and left behind them laborious researches, whose progressive improvements and beneficent effects

will rejoice the hearts of all the descending millions of Adam. Shall we be unmindful of these our benefactors? No—the appearances of this day forbid it. They evince a sense of the importance of patronizing and promoting those arts which are the basis of civil society.

Art, as it stands opposed to nature, signifies a particular system of rules or directions devised by human ingenuity for the attainment of some particular purpose. Art and science stand in the same relation to each other, as practice and speculation. Arts may be divided into three kinds; liberal, fine, and mechanic. The first respects principally the understanding; the second, the imagination; the third, the hand and body. Hence all arts are connected. As the faculty of understanding is necessary to proficiency in all; so they all derive assistance from each other. Of all arts, as they respect the convenience of individuals, the wealth and respectability of nations, those termed mechanic are by far the most important. Where is a nation that ever rose to any considerable degree of eminence without them? In a country where the rights of citizens are ascertained and secure by an equal administration of justice, the mechanic arts will flourish; because the laborer is sure of an adequate compensation. Injustice and tyranny cannot blast the fruit of his toil. The mechanic stand on a more permanent foundation than the fine arts. The essence of these is expression, their end is pleasure. Their progress depends on delicacy of taste, which is rare, and on the protection of the opulent, which is still more rare. Interest is a most powerful excitement to industry. Industry in mechanic employment will secure all the necessities and conveniencies of life; but industry in the fine arts is not always sure even of a subsistence. Perfection in the fine arts is the certain forerunner of their decline. They are nearest their ruin when they appear to be at the greatest distance. But as the causes which gave birth to the mechanic arts must continue the same, these arts will continue as long as society exists, the chief sources of national wealth and importance.

Arts and manufactures are of great consequence, as they respect the convenience, accommodation, and improvement of life. Let us for a moment revert to a state of uncivilization:—

Here we find man a roving inhabitant of the wilderness, distinguished from the beasts by nothing but the form of his body, and the celerity of inventing means of defence. In this condition, as he is destitute of those arts which furnish the necessities and conveniences of civilized life ; as his means of procuring subsistence are scanty, and the event of his exertions precarious ; he is under a total incapacity of improving the powers of his mind, and of exalting his nature to the sublime enjoyments of moral and religious knowledge. He knows neither the cause nor design of his existence. He perhaps feels gratitude to the sun for lighting him to the chace, and the moon for guiding his returning steps to his hut. But he knows not, he worships not the beneficent Creator, who established the earth on which he treads, and spread out the sky at which he gazes. The splendid wonders of creation hung all round him can neither arrest his attention, nor direct his soul to the great first cause. How abject the condition of man unacquainted with those arts which accommodate and embellish life ! If we go back to barbarism we exchange the elegant mansion reared by art, for the unsightly hut thrown together by necessity ; we exchange the furniture affording so much convenience and ease for want ; we exchange the neat and brilliant apparel, contributing so much to the pleasure and improvement of society, for the garb of the bear and wolf. Our minds fall from mildness to ferocity, from improvement to uncivilization. We lose all our splendor, like the star when it darts from the summit of heaven, and breaks on the rock of the wilderness. A comparison of the advantages and conveniencies accruing to us from arts and manufactures, with the state of things in those periods in which they were unknown, is the only circumstance which can effectually convince us of their value. If we place ourselves at the first dawn of improvement, a splendid scene opens upon us. The genius of man, impelled by a restless thirst of happiness, displays its powers and portrays its excellence in the invention and improvement of arts. These mark the first step of man from the savage state. These, by confining his attention, render him humane, and by furnishing the means of acquiring property,

excite his ambition to multiply those conveniencies and facilities for which the desire of ease creates an unceasing demand.

The great importance of mechanic arts will appear from their intimate connexion with agriculture. The latter began in the delightful garden of Eden. The manner in which it was performed, and by what kind of utensils, are unknown. After the primitive lapse, the stubbornness and infertility of the soil, originated instruments and machines of husbandry. Without these, the productions of the earth could not be obtained. The curse which subjected man to laborious employment is in its consequences pregnant with the highest benevolence. It was the occasion of all those arts which render men industrious, and gradually exalt them to the primitive glory of creation. All the important advantages resulting from agriculture are to be referred to mechanic art: For how can the earth be cultivated and its productions reared without proper instruments? Arts and agriculture are reciprocally advantageous. The productions of the latter furnish means for the exertions of the former; and the exertions of the former perfect and facilitate the latter. If we destroy mechanic arts, we destroy agriculture: and yet if the mountains and seas cover all their treasures; if foreign commerce be entirely neglected, if all the embellishment and splendor of life cease; yet agriculture carried on by the assistance of mechanic arts, will furnish an ample subsistence for the inhabitants, and a sufficient security against foreign invasion.

Commerce in the present advanced state of society, is of the highest importance. Let us for a moment contemplate the connexion subsisting between this, mechanic arts and manufactures. As soon as men can procure subsistence they seek to multiply conveniencies and accommodations. These if they cannot procure in their own they will seek in foreign countries. Hence the origin of commerce. But commerce cannot subsist unless something can be spared for what is wanted. But where are we to look for the surplus that can be spared? To the labors of the mechanic and manufacturer. The productions of the soil, may indeed become great articles of exportation, but how are these productions reared? By the labors of

the farmer. But these labors cannot be performed without the assistance of the mechanic and manufacturer. Without this, neither the means of navigation, nor the materials of commerce, can be furnished. The procurement of unwrought materials requires great assistance from mechanic labor. The exportation of these may be great, but not so profitable as the exportation of those on which the artificer has bestowed his labor. Labor is the only original source of wealth. Consequently, it must add a real and permanent value to those materials on which it is bestowed. A commercial demand for these must rouse the industry, and increase the wealth of a nation. The connexion between arts, manufactures and commerce, with regard to the highest interests of society, is indissoluble. The interest of no class of citizens is more essentially involved in the promotion of arts and manufactures, than the interest of merchants. They have the greatest power of promoting them; for as they generally possess large capitals, they can make the most advantageous arrangement. Encomiums too great cannot be lavished on commerce. It enlarges the acquaintance of men; unites distant nations in affection; promotes a spirit of peace, and gradually cements the whole world into one family. It increases beyond every thing else the wealth and power of nations. But we ought to recollect that commerce cannot exist without arts and manufactures; though these can exist, and in great perfection, without commerce.

The importance and usefulness of arts and manufactures will appear, if we consider them with respect to war. Men have naturally an aversion to labor. Their propensity to ease renders them feeble, and disarms them of resolution. Labor furnishes the body with strength and the mind with valor. The great advantage, therefore, of arts and manufactures as to war, is, that they supply a nation with a permanent fund of strength and activity to be employed in its defence. Laboring people are the security of a free nation. Those who live in idleness and effeminacy are not easily brought to laborious exertion. They must of consequence fall a prey to the first invader.

If arts and manufactures are of such importance to society, they surely deserve the highest encouragement. This, however,

ought not to be given by pecuniary bounties, as has been frequently done. This, though it may increase the wealth of certain individuals, yet it will not increase the wealth of a nation. A nation will consume the production of any art or manufacture so long as it is necessary to encourage them by bounties. If the productions of that labor, which is expended in any particular art or manufacture, do not return to the laborer a sufficient compensation, then surely it would be great impolicy in a nation to make up the deficiency by bounties; because, in this case she would tax herself, and diminish her capital. That art or manufacture which cannot support itself had better be neglected.

To promote agriculture is to promote manufactures and the mechanic arts. For the greater the perfection to which agriculture is carried, the more fertile will be the soil, and the more plentiful its productions;—of consequence, a smaller number of laborers can furnish subsistence for the community. Ample means of subsistence will enable a greater portion of the inhabitants to devote themselves to mechanic employment. When this is the case, all the divisions necessary to expedite and perfect labor can be made.

Arts and manufactures may also be greatly promoted by prohibiting or restraining the importation of such articles and materials as can be produced and furnished in our own country. Such a procedure, by checking the supply necessary for the domestic demand, would be a powerful excitement to domestic industry. The price of manufactures would be enhanced.—This circumstance would arouse a spirit of emulation; which, by furnishing a plentiful supply to the public demand, would reduce the price to a proper medium. The productive powers of labor would be increased, and the national wealth augmented.

From the great increase of labor caused by prohibitions and restrictions on importation, would arise a great surplus for exportation. Encouragement given to this exportation would not only support but augment those productive powers of labor, to which the national demand first gave birth. But how shall this encouragement be given? If by bounties, the consequence will be, that a part of the national wealth will be turned into a chan-

nel different from that in which it was before. But will the nation gain by this? Probably she will not; because it is extremely uncertain whether the increase of labor caused by the bounties bestowed, will reimburse the national treasury and return a sufficient compensation to the laborer. Possibly, in some instances, a temporary diversion of a part of the general labor of the community, to some particular manufacture, may be successfully effected; but if this diversion of labor cannot be continued without bounties, it had better be neglected; because the exertions of the laborer, in this case, do not afford him adequate compensation. Commercial treaties, in which the merchants and manufacturers of our own country have particular privileges granted for the disposal of our own productions in foreign countries, are, without doubt for the encouragement of exportation, methods which the soundest policy would dictate and approve. Because the particular privileges granted our own merchants, would, by giving them a kind of monopoly, give their goods a more rapid sale and an enhanced price.

The preceding observations evince the vast importance of arts and manufactures, with respect to civilization, opulence and power. Had any person but a few centuries ago prophesied the amazing accession of wealth and splendor, since gained to the states of Europe by the support which manufactures have given to commerce, he would have been deemed a visionary enthusiast. To what a degree of power and wealth since the reign of Elizabeth, has England arisen? Though her commerce before was by no means inconsiderable, yet at this period it began particularly to flourish.—The Dutch, by becoming a commercial, had become an opulent and powerful people. Their example excited a spirit of emulation among the English and induced them to follow their steps. The success of these two powers roused a spirit of industry; originated and improved arts and manufactures. These in their turn augmented commerce, and consequently that wealth and naval power, which have effected the establishment of colonies in almost all parts of the known world. The Phœnicians rose to great eminence by commerce. Arts and manufactures furnishing the materials of their trade, made them masters of the sea. When we behold

them covering the ocean with their fleets, pursuing hazardous voyages to unknown countries, opening new sources of wealth and power, forming friendly intercourse with remote nations, establishing new colonies in Africa and Europe; we are apt inconsiderately to lavish all our praises on commerce; not reflecting that commerce cannot exist without mechanic arts and manufactures. Carthage founded by the Phœnicians and inheriting their spirit, rose to such amazing opulence and power, that she could dispute with Rome, the empire of the world. At the commencement of the third punic war, Carthage had seven hundred thousand inhabitants, and in Africa three hundred cities in her dependence. The original source of her immense wealth, of her numerous population and almost invincible power, was labor. After the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the great, the seat of commerce and consequently of arts and manufactures was removed to Alexandria in Egypt. Here commerce, patronized by the Ptolemies, was carried to a degree of improvement unknown in Tyre and Carthage. Ptolemy Philadelphus extended the bounds of his kingdom over such vast countries and beyond the sea, that he possessed in his dominions four thousand cities. His fleets shaded the ocean. Whence all this astonishing greatness, wealth, and power? From arts and manufactures. Commerce, it is true, is the immediate but not the original and most important source. Though we are dazzled with the beauty and magnificence of the superstructure, let us not forget that the foundation, though usually kept out of sight, is the most important part. Should we at once deprive ourselves of all the advantages derived from the useful arts, life would scarcely be tolerable. The change would inevitably be fatal to a great part of the community.

Mechanic employment is the first and most important advance towards civilization. What particularly distinguished the aborigines of South America from the savage state was the building of regular cities. At the era of the Spanish invasion the Mexicans and Peruvians had made great advances in civil society and government; because they had made great improvements in useful arts. The amazing populousness of Mexico and Peru, proves invincibly, that arts were carried to great

perfection. Montezuma could bring as many fighting men into the field as there are inhabitants in the United States. How different was the state of North-America? Not a trait of regular art was to be seen. The country though fertile, was thinly peopled. This vast continent exhibited a melancholy spectacle of the unhappy, degraded state of man, while destitute of useful arts. Similar doubtless must have been the situation of all the nations of the earth. How is that surprising change effected, which exalts man above the savage state, and raises his nature to the highest degree of refinement and glory? A few unite in society for mutual assistance. Change of condition produces change of inclination. Invention roused by necessity, operates in researches after more expeditious means of procuring the subsistence and multiplying the conveniences of life. The conical hut is now too contracted. The square one succeeds. Here is the origin of architecture, that art which contributes so much to the ease of life; that art, whose majestic monuments have astonished the world. Architecture began to improve soon after agriculture. The vicissitudes of seasons, the inclemency of weather, and the violence of tempests, roused the genius of man into activity, for the procurement of shelter. Architecture like all other arts rose by degrees to perfection. The first city mentioned in history is that built by Cain after he was cursed for the murder of his brother. This art first appeared in Asia, where the first Adam was formed, and where the second, the son of a carpenter, was born. It was carried to a surprising degree of vastness by the Egyptians, Assyrians and Persians. To the Greeks, from whom we are to expect every thing excellent in genius and taste, we must look for the perfection of this art. They improved it to the highest degree of elegance, ornament and beautiful proportion. From them the Romans received their architecture, and gave it such a high degree of magnificence, that their models remain unequalled by anything of the kind, to be found in modern times.

In whatever respect we view man in the progress of society, we shall find his condition meliorated in proportion to the improvement of useful arts.

Time forbids me to enlarge on their origin, progress and

improvement. I therefore, beg the liberty to add a few words to the respectable Association, which I have now the honor to address. You gentlemen, have the satisfaction to reflect, that the employments you pursue, are the chief sources of convenience, opulence and power. Your exertions not only promote your own but the interests of society. Because mechanic labor always increases the value of the materials on which it is bestowed. Your arts originated in the necessities of men. In proportion as they relieve these, they contribute to the perfection of the social state. They tend immediately to exalt man from the rude simplicity of barbarous life, to the refined elegance of polished society. Unanimity in your exertions will expedite the career of improvement in arts and manufactures. It will facilitate the acquirement of property, display new scenes, and afford more powerful excitements to industry and genius. Though your occupations are less splendid, they are not less useful than those of the philosopher. Without your assistance, he can neither explain the phenomena of nature, nor bring down the frame of heaven and place it before our eyes. The principles on which your Association is founded, appear calculated to produce very salutary effects. The care you have taken to make provision for the relief of the unfortunate and distressed ; to accommodate difficulties by amicable adjustments ; to prevent the expense of time and property in legal contention ; to exterminate vice and suppress licentiousness ; these things, reflect honor on the cause of benevolence and justice. Your employments pursued with invincible perseverance, will infallibly secure prosperity. The constitution and condition of man, indicate his original destination to labor and activity. God has not offered wealth and happiness to his acceptance, but to his acquirement. In this world he must not expect something for nothing. To be industrious in some useful employment, is to act in conformity to the great harmonious scheme struck out to us by the benevolent author of our existence. How honorable then, is that occupation, which brings our exertions into a coincidence with his designs ! The subjection of man to toil, will in its ultimate effects, develop all the noble powers of his soul, and exalt society to the summit of human glory. It will rouse the efforts

of genius, and turn them into a train of exertions, whose effects will cast a new form over the face of the whole world. The numerous embarrassments which subject man to difficulty, the great obstacles which impede his career in the vast race of existence, are to be removed by the hand of industry and art. Improvement in the useful arts, has paved the way to those improvements in science, which have conferred so much happiness on society, and shed so much lustre on the human mind. The advantages resulting from mechanic employment, have enabled men to devote to the cultivation of literature that portion of time which their former necessities compelled them to spend in the procurement of subsistence. Let none therefore, however extensive their acquirements, however exalted or splendid their situation, despise the arts of industry and peace. Consider, gentlemen, that your several occupations regularly pursued, exhibit imitations of that admirable order and harmonious adjustment so conspicuous in the great system of creation. What wonderful art appears in the earth with all its appendages, under our feet, and in the heavens with all their vast machinery of worlds over our heads! Deity has given you an example. Follow it and be happy. Retrospection on lives, devoted to useful, industrious occupation, will afford the most pleasing and permanent satisfaction. May you persevere in your various employments, living peaceably and honestly with all men. A consciousness of having done your duty in the business you have pursued will, by cheering you in the hour of adversity, brighten up the prospects of futurity, and bear forward your hopes to that delightful kingdom where the blessed shall forever cease from labor.



AN
ORATION
DELIVERED
IN THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE
IN PROVIDENCE,

JULY 4th, 1795,

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.



TO THE
WORTHY INHABITANTS
OF THE TOWN OF
PROVIDENCE,
THE FOLLOWING ORATION

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

J. MAXCY.



AN ORATION.

THE citizens of America celebrate that day which gave birth to their liberties. The recollection of this event, replete with consequences so beneficial to mankind, swells every heart with joy, and fills every tongue with praise. We celebrate not the sanguinary exploits of a tyrant to subjugate and enslave millions of his fellow-creatures ; we celebrate neither the birth nor the coronation of that phantom styled a king ;—but the resurrection of liberty, the emancipation of mankind, the regeneration of the world. These are the sources of our joy, these the causes of our triumph. We pay no homage at the tomb of kings, to sublime our feelings—we trace no line of illustrious ancestors, to support our dignity—we recur to no usages sanctioned by the authority of the great to protect our rejoicings ;—no, we love liberty, we glory in the rights of men, we glory in independence. On whatever part of God's creation a human form pines under chains, there Americans drop their tears.

A dark cloud once shaded this beautiful quarter of the globe. Consternation for a while agitated the hearts of the inhabitants. War desolated our fields, and buried our vales in blood. But the day-spring from on high soon opened upon us its glittering portals. The Angel of Liberty descending, dropped on WASHINGTON's brow the wreath of victory, and stamped on American freedom the seal of omnipotence. The darkness is past, and the

true light now shines, to enliven and rejoice mankind. We tread a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness ; and view a new heaven, flaming with inextinguishable stars. Our feet will no more descend into the vale of oppressions. Our shoulders will no more bend under the weight of a foreign domination, as cruel as it was unjust. Well may we rejoice at the return of this glorious anniversary ; a day dear to every American—a day to be had in everlasting remembrance—a day whose light circulates joy through the hearts of all republicans, and terror through the hearts of all tyrants.

Liberty is the birthright of man. It is coeval with his existence. It is a privilege wrought into his constitution, accommodated to his situation, and proclaimed his own by the concurrent voice of nature and reason. Who shall rob man of this privilege ? It was given him by the Almighty. Man, though made free, was made to be governed by laws. These however cannot be obligatory, unless founded in reason and justice. Liberty consists not in exemption from the control of laws, but in acting according to laws ; laws just and equal, established by the unanimous consent of the community.

While uncivilized man roams through the wilderness, he enjoys the liberty of nature. His bed is the earth, his canopy the sky. Uncontrolled by the force of human institutions, and unacquainted with those delicate obligations which render men slaves in the social state, he acknowledges no power but that of his own arm, and submits to no decision but that of his own will. But no sooner does the necessity of mutual relief and protection involve him in the relations of civil society, than his liberty assumes a new form ; better accommodated to his capacity, because more limited ; more useful, because subjected to the laws of order. This new situation of man originates a multiplicity of rights, obligations and duties. To secure him in the peaceful and inviolate enjoyment of the first, to stimulate and compel him to the punctual and invariable performance of the last, these are the highest objects of civil government. That system of administration under whose operation these objects are most expeditiously obtained, and most permanently secured must be deemed the most perfect. The more effectually the

persons of men are guarded from injury, and their property from unjust spoliation, the less will they be liable to contention, more happy at home, more happy abroad ; more humane, just and benevolent ; more industrious, wealthy, virtuous and enlightened. What then must be our opinion of that system of politics adopted and pursued by the founders of all despotic monarchies ? What incomparable lessons of wisdom would they inculcate upon us ? They teach us, by their doctrine and practice, that millions are created for the use and pleasure of an individual, who is amenable to no human tribunal ; who can infringe the rights, dispose of the property and destroy the lives of his subjects. Sentiments these, which sap the foundation of that great political maxim, that the safety and happiness of the community are the highest ends of civil government. Had mankind known, that there was but one being in the universe of sufficient wisdom and goodness to be invested with unlimited power, they never would have submitted to dominion founded in usurpation, supported by cruelty, and administered by injustice. The first object of men in the career of ambition, is to render themselves independent ; the second to subject and oppress others. Monarchical governments, however limited, have never secured to the people the enjoyment of their rights. A crown, it has been said, is too splendid a price to be conferred on merit. If so, surely it is too splendid a price to glitter on the head of arrogance, or hereditary folly. The ambition of kings has never known any limits. Dazzled by the splendor of crowns, and infatuated by the possession of supreme power ; flattered on every side by the servile compliance of courtiers, and deluded into a belief that the determinations of their own wills ought to be inviolable laws of conduct for their subjects, they have fancied themselves the vicegerents of God, born and designed for no end but the exercise of unbounded authority. Rapacious of wealth, and ambitious of power, they have never failed to encroach on those intermediate authorities constituted by the people, and designed by them as an impregnable barrier against regal invasion.

Aristocratical governments, though they may be more favorable than monarchical to the peace and security of the people,

yet they do not secure those important objects which ought ever to be kept in view in all systems of civil policy. When the supreme power is vested in a number, the chance for wisdom, virtue, and impartial administration of justice, is greater than when the supreme power is vested in an individual. This may be expected to be the case, when the members succeed to their places by some possessions, qualifications or inheritance. But the advantages accruing to government from that wisdom and experience which are to be expected in a permanent council, will be counterbalanced by the evils of dissension unavoidable among men invested with equal power; men whose privileges will render them oppressive, and whose ambition, unawed by a superior, will hurry on their passions to the most desperate extremes. Deplorable indeed must be the situation of a people, whose rights are perpetually exposed to the capricious insolence of combined aristocratical power. Prudence would dictate the sufferance of one, rather than a thousand tyrants; but reason and common sense forbid the sufferance of any.

If we would secure the interest and tranquility of a community, we must have recourse to some form of government, where the supreme power is collected, lodged and preserved by the voluntary choice of the people. When this is the case, civil liberty, secure from the grasp of a despotic tyrant, and the ambitious pretensions of a haughty nobility, will exist in the greatest perfection, and diffuse its salutary influence through the whole circle of society. Man, in a state of improvement, subjected to the regulations of political administration, must relinquish so much of his natural liberty as is inconsistent with the good of the community. He must not consult and gratify private inclination at the expense of the public. He must not indulge a haughty spirit of self-direction and independency, but cheerfully submit to the control of just and equal laws. In doing this, he secures and enjoys the only liberty desirable in any state but that of solitude. Did all the members of society indulge their own dispositions, aim at their own objects, and gratify their own passions, without any regard to the consistency of their conduct with the general interest, they would be involved in so many difficulties, from a mutual interference of private

pursuits, that they would enjoy but a small share of that liberty and happiness which are secured by submission to good government. The condition of men, their connexions and dependencies in civil society, are such, that all laws ought to be deemed salutary and just, which restrain the will and curtail the liberty of each individual, whenever the indulgence of that will and the enjoyment of that liberty, would contravene the operation of those means instituted for the security of public happiness. Union of men in society, of necessity diminishes their natural liberty. But each one ought to consider, that he gains vastly more by the diminution of other men's liberty, than he loses by the diminution of his own. — In every species of civil government, there exists a supreme power, from which there is no appeal. The rights of the people will be most effectually secured, where this power is deposited and restricted in such a manner, as to afford no prospect of success to ambitious, designing men. This end is obtained with greater ease and certainty in a republic than in any other government. The first principle of genuine republicanism is, that all men, as to rights, are equal. From this plain undeniable position it follows, that all power not originating in the consent of the people; all power not exercised according to their direction, and subjected to their control, is usurpation, injustice and tyranny. If an enlightened nation cannot enjoy happiness under a government formed and administered by her own consent, she never can under any. If under a monarchy men are liable to oppression, exaction, and military domination; if they are liable at all times to be involved in unnecessary wars, to gratify the caprice of the reigning prince, or a favorite minister; if they are constantly liable to insecurity of their persons and property, through the instability or deficiency of salutary regulations; if under an aristocracy men are liable to suffer the pernicious effects of combined ambition, or the horrors of dissension, among the rulers clothed with equal authority; if men are liable to these things, it is because they are deprived of their rights by privileged orders, and subjected to the control of laws enacted and enforced without their consent. All the inconveniences resulting from arbitrary power lodged in the hands of an individual, or of a number, are obviated by the

first principle of free government. If all men are born equal, surely all have an equal right to a voice in the enactment of laws ; all have an equal right to suffrage in the election of men into places of power and trust. Possessed of these rights, the people can always manifest their will, and establish regulations accommodated to their situation. Their exigencies can always be known, and always relieved. But in governments where the administration of public affairs rests in an individual, or a few ; where offices are disposed of by caprice, or sold to the highest bidder ; where the right to govern is claimed by hereditary succession, and descends to folly as often as to wisdom ; where these things occur, what can be expected but ignorance in the rulers, with respect to the real condition of the community ? What can be expected but servility and fear in the people, haughtiness and audacity in the magistrates ? What can be expected but the desolating pestilence of exorbitant avarice and unbounded ambition ? That spirit of wisdom and benevolence so conspicuous in the constitution of the United States, levels all the pompous distinctions of rank, opens the way of honor and promotion to all who are worthy, and affords ample security to the persons and property of the whole community. The circumstances attending the settlement and growth of this country, till its dismemberment from the government of Great Britain, tended directly to pave the way to liberty and independence. The facility with which landed property was acquired, and the certain enjoyment of the productions of their industry, inspired the inhabitants with disgust for a state of dependency, and love for a state of freedom. The manner in which they were trained up from youth to manhood, taught them their rights. No usurping tyrant here fixed the standard of despotism, and awed them into a state of vassalage. No haughty nobility engrossed the soil, and reduced the people to the necessity of starving, or submitting to the drudgery of slaves. Each man was his own master, walked on his own ground, reaped the fruit of his own toil. Could it be expected that such men would peaceably cringe under the lash of a tyrant ? Could it be expected that such men would suffer their rights to be infringed by privileged orders, or the produce of their industry to be decimated by ec-

clesiastical oppression? Was the parliament of Great Britain so ignorant of the state of this country, as to imagine that the people, whose daily experience taught them their liberties, would sit still till they were bound in chains? By what authority could the British government impose laws on us without our consent, or tax us without allowing us the right of representation! With what success their arbitrary designs were crowned, let the late revolution declare. Let this joyful anniversary of our independence announce it to remotest ages, and stand an eternal monument of the escape of liberty from the harpy fangs of despotism.

The political situation of our country, resulting from the admirable constitution and administration of our government, puts us into possession of many blessings, and opens upon us many prospects, not enjoyed by any other nation under heaven. No favored orders can here claim the exclusive right of legislation. All stand on the same level, enjoy the same freedom, and submit to the same laws. Places of honor, profit and trust, are equally open to all our citizens. No particular set of men is here supported in idleness and extravagance, at the expense of the community. No unnecessary taxes are imposed on the people, nor is it probable there will be, because they affect the legislators as much as the citizens. Property cannot be more effectually secured than it is in the United States; for no man here can be deprived of it but by the operation of laws established by the whole community. The lives and fortunes of all the Americans are on board one vessel; it is therefore the duty, interest and happiness of all to take care of it. The present situation of our country is peculiarly favorable to the cultivation of genius. Great capacity and extensive acquirements are indispensably necessary to qualify men to manage with success the political concerns, and to discharge with reputation the important duties annexed to the governmental departments of these States. Important objects are exposed to the attainment of all;—objects calculated to arrest the attention and fire the ambition of all who are disposed to render themselves meritorious of public esteem. That political equality and general information which prevail under our government, bring forth genius from

every class of citizens. This circumstance renders it probable, that happiness will here be enjoyed in a greater degree, and in longer duration, than it has been under any government since the institution of civil society.

The freedom of the press, so essential to the preservation of liberty, is here enjoyed in its greatest latitude. The conduct of every citizen invested with authority, all occurrences foreign and domestic, are presented in one view to the whole nation. Such is the light diffused through the whole mass of the people, that none in places of trust can escape the most accurate inspection. The freedom of the press converts united America into an enlightened congress of politicians. How can our liberties be subverted, while the people are universally acquainted with the conduct of their representatives? These are elected into office for certain periods, at the expiration of which they must revert back to their former places as private citizens. Are they not under the greatest degree of responsibility? Are they not under the greatest inducement to distinguish their conduct with rectitude and wisdom? Will they be likely to adopt regulations injurious to the community, when they themselves must soon feel their operation; The situation of this country indicates its original destination to independence. How could it be expected that such an extensive continent, at such a vast distance from the old world, would not be inhabited at some period by men capable of governing and defending themselves? Who in his senses could imagine, that a country like this, replete with all the necessaries of life; a country whose ports open to every quarter of the globe, and whose fleets will one day cover the ocean; who could imagine that such a country, inhabited by men fond to excess of liberty, would pay submission to the petty island of Britain? We might almost as reasonably expect, that the sun and all the planetary worlds would rush down from their shining spheres, to gravitate round a pebble. By the appointment of heaven we stand by our own strength, disconnected from foreign influence and foreign power. This circumstance undoubtedly gave birth to that calm deliberation, which reflected so much honor on the Americans, in forming and establishing the federal constitution. From our local situation, we enjoy in

a superior degree the advantages of neutrality. Had we submitted to the rapacious demands of Britain, how deplorable must have been our situation? How disgracefully should we have been led off by a foreign master, and plunged in all the horrors of war! How many Americans must have breathed out their lives on the plains of Europe! How many of our hands must have been employed in the drudgery of kings, to undermine the fair temple of liberty! The great Parent of the universe has peculiarly distinguished the Americans, in encouraging them to assert, and in enabling them to defend their rights. These, however, have been most atrociously violated by that supercilious overbearing conduct, which has usually marked the British ministry. They, regardless of the rights of neutrality, have committed spoliations on our property, at which uncivilized barbarians would blush; spoliations attended with that rapacious meanness and contemptible insolence, which no pretences however artful can conceal, no evasions however plausible can excuse.

Among the numerous advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of these States, we may rank the exemption from ecclesiastical establishments. The incorporation of these with systems of civil policy, has never failed to promote bigotry, hypocrisy and oppression. The requirement of subscription to particular articles of faith, as an indispensable qualification in candidates for offices of public trust, is a most flagitious intrusion on the equal rights of men; an intrusion which screens ambition and avarice under the mantle of religion, converts religion into a mere engine of state, patronizes vice under the pompous ceremonies of worship, levels all moral distinctions, and damps that voluntary ardor of piety which alone is acceptable to the Supreme Being. What right has the arm of the magistrate to intrude itself into the field of religious opinion? To what order of men has the Almighty delegated wisdom and authority to prescribe modes of faith? None but voluntary worshippers are acceptable to God. Those who choose to worship him, will do it without the constraints of civil law. All others are hypocrites. Who then can advocate the necessity of religious establishments, without betraying a want of sincerity? Religious liberty exists in these States,

but not without some restraints. These restraints have originated in an unjustifiable interference of civil authority. To the everlasting honor of Rhode Island be it said, that her legislature has never assumed the authority of regulating ecclesiastical concerns. Religion here stands as it ought to, on its own basis, disconnected with all political considerations.

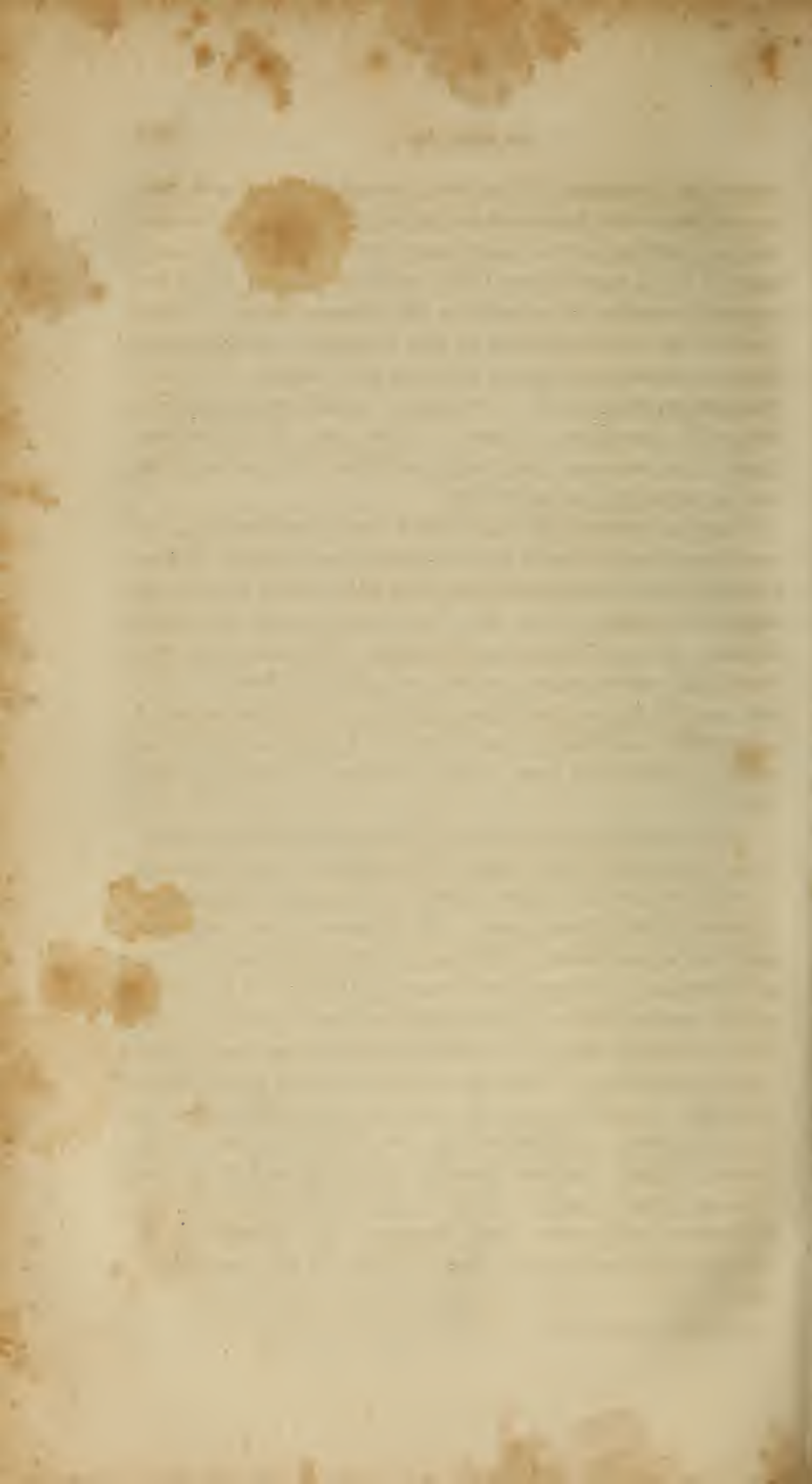
A slight view of the condition of mankind in other quarters of the globe, will at once convince us of the superior privileges and blessings enjoyed in America. Imagination can scarcely depict the wretched state of the people inhabiting the immense regions of Asia and Africa. There human nature, enveloped in darkness, is degraded to the condition of brutes, transferred like them from one owner to another, pressed under the load of arbitrary power. Their hearts never expand under the enlivening beams of liberty. In many parts of Europe the condition of the people is more tolerable. The spirit of oppression however predominates, and rears up its hideous form to oppose the progress of liberty. France, in breaking her chains and seizing her freedom, has experienced all the horrors of war. Its desolating calamities have rolled over her fertile plains. Her armies animated by that ardor which first glowed in America, have triumphed over all opposition. Despotism has been shaken to its lowest foundations. Brave Frenchmen; your cause is the cause of all nature; your victories, the liberties of the world!

Turning off our eyes from the bloody fields of Europe, we may rejoice for the happiness of the United States. In a full persuasion of the excellency of our government, let us shun those vices which tend to its subversion, and cultivate those virtues which will render it permanent, and transmit it in full vigor to all succeeding ages. Let not the haggard forms of intemperance and luxury ever lift up their destroying visages in this happy country. Let economy, frugality, moderation and justice, at home and abroad, mark the conduct of all our citizens. Let it be our constant care to diffuse knowledge and goodness through all ranks of society. The people of this country will never be uneasy under its present form of government, provided they have sufficient information to judge of its excellency. No nation under heaven enjoys so much happi-

ness as the Americans. Convince them of this, and will they not shudder at the thought of subverting their political constitution, or suffering it to degenerate into aristocracy or monarchy? Let a sense of our happy situation awaken in us the warmest sensations of gratitude to the Supreme Being. Let us consider him as the author of all our blessings, acknowledging him as our beneficent parent, protector and friend. The predominant tendency of his providences towards us as a nation, evinces his benevolent designs. Every part of his conduct speaks in a language plain and intelligible. Let us open our ears, let us attend, let us be wise.

While we celebrate the anniversary of our independence, let us not pass over in silence the defenders of our country. Where are those brave Americans whose lives were cloven down in the tempest of battle? Are they not bending from the bright abodes? A voice from the altar cries, "These are they who loved their country, these are they who died for liberty." We now reap the fruit of their agony and toil. Let their memories be eternally embalmed in our bosoms. Let the infants of all posterity prattle their fame, and drop tears of courage for their fate.

The consequences of American independence will soon reach to the extremities of the world. The shining car of freedom will soon roll over the necks of kings, and bear off the oppressed to scenes of liberty and peace. The clamors of war will cease under the whole heaven. The tree of liberty will shoot its top up to the sun. Its boughs will hang over the ends of the world, and the wearied nations will lie down and rest under its shade. Here in America stands the asylum for the distressed and persecuted of all nations. This vast temple of freedom rises majestically fair. Founded on a rock, it will remain unshaken by the force of tyrants, undiminished by the flight of time. Long streams of light emanate through its portals, and chase the darkness from distant nations. Its turrets will swell into the heavens, rising above every tempest; and the pillar of divine glory, descending from God, will rest for ever on its summit.



AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSE,

IN

PROVIDENCE,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1799.

THE GLENN

1891/1892

AN ORATION.

CALLED by your suffrages, Fellow-Citizens, I once more address you on the Anniversary of our National Independence. This event, though glorious in itself, and wonderful in its effects, is, by the peculiar situation of our public affairs, exalted to a point of unprecedented importance. Never has our country been exposed to greater danger ; never has our government been assaulted with greater violence, by foreign foes and domestic traitors ; never have been more insidious, persevering and malevolent attempts to corrupt public opinion ; to undermine the foundations of religion, to cut asunder the sinews of moral obligation, and to cover this happy land with carnage, desolation and ruin. Let us then with enthusiasm hail the birth-day of our Sovereignty. Let us summon all our energies against the artifices of secret intrigue, and the aggressions of open hostility. To animate your patriotism, and inspire you with all the ardor of violated liberty ; to render you feelingly alive to the necessity of united vigorous measures of defence, to rouse up your generous indignation at the unprovoked abuses practised by a foreign nation of gigantic power, permit me to call back your attention to that period, not far past, when all that was dear to you as members of society and subjects of government, was suspended over the gulf of ruin ; when you rose up with an in-

vincible courage, and, in the voice of united thunders, announced to the world that you were free, sovereign and independent. On that great and trying occasion, what were your feelings? Did you tamely submit to the usurping arm of foreign domination? Did you surrender your liberties, without a struggle or a sigh? No, Americans, you did not; you acted the part of men worthy of liberty; you displayed the standard of freedom; you drew the sword of vengeance; you discharged the thunderbolt of destruction, and, under the protection of heaven, obtained a triumph, which glitters in capitals on the pillars of eternity. Succeeding years crowned the efforts of our wisdom, and the labors of our industry, with a success and prosperity which have astonished the world. The establishment of an energetic government, the cultivation of the soil, the rapid increase of population, the great extension of commerce, the improvement of arts and sciences—all combined to perpetuate our freedom, to augment our power, and to render us a respectable and invincible nation. Guarded by an immense ocean, we hoped to escape that whirlwind which has long been spending its rage on the devoted nations of Europe. We assumed a neutral station: our right hand held out the branch of peace, while our left welcomed the persecuted stranger. Britain first smote us with her gigantic arm: she listened to our remonstrances, and redressed our wrongs. France, irritated at our success in preserving peace, determined on revenge. She renewed with additional vigor those secret, insidious arts, which she had long practised to control our public councils, and to destroy the confidence of the people in the government of their choice. Detected and disappointed by the vigilance of our rulers, she threw aside the mask, and disclosed her vengeful countenance on the Atlantic. Our commerce fell a prey to her all-devouring jaws. The overtures made by our government have been neglected with the most haughty disdain, and our messengers of peace treated like the representatives of a nation destitute of wisdom and power. We have now no resource left to vindicate our honor and our rights, but our courage and our force. These we trust are sufficient to defend us against all enemies, whether foreign or domestic.

We must rank among our disgraces as well as among our mis-

fortunes, the existence of a set of men in our country, who have derived their political principles from foreign influence and foreign intrigue ; who exert their utmost efforts to ruin our government, and to prostrate all permanent establishments. These men discard, as the effects of superstition, all ancient institutions ; and, instead of adhering to an uniform order of things, delight in perpetual revolutions. Their system of rights, like their system of government, is metaphysic and fantastical. They do not consider that government is a science derived from the experience of ages, and that it ought to embrace the rights and welfare, not of the present age only, but of all posterity. They consider the chief magistrate in no other view than a private citizen ; government in no other view than an affair of temporary expediency or advantage. Thus they level that distinction which is the foundation of submission to laws ; and reduce a contract the most solemn and important to an equality with a partnership in commerce, which at any hour may be broken off and dissolved. Let their ideas of government be realized in actual operation, and there is an end of all order, peace and prosperity. For how can agriculture and commerce, arts and sciences, be carried on to perfection under an administration perpetually changing ? What security has property ? What excitement can there be to industry, where it is liable to lose, in one moment, the acquisition of years ? A good government will derive assistance from the experience of past ages. It will embrace and perpetuate the complicated mass of individual and public rights and interests. It ought to be considered as an inheritance to be transmitted from one generation to another ; and not as the capricious offspring of a moment, perpetually exposed to destruction, from the varying whim of popular phrenzy, or the daring strides of licentious ambition. The great objects of national importance cannot be obtained, except under a political system, rendered permanent by a well regulated balance of power ; guarding on the one hand against tyrannical usurpation, and on the other against democratic violence. Such we conceive is the government of these United States. Nevertheless, there are many who view it in a far different light ; or, because they are conscious of its energy, are

continually advancing opinions and doctrines which tend to its subversion. They well know that the people of this country are very averse to a government like that of England. They take advantage from this circumstance, and are continually ringing it in our ears, that our government apes the manners of the British, and is rapidly changing into that complicated system of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. This representation is given, either from ignorance of the British constitution, or from a desire to annihilate our confidence in our own. Compare for a moment the principal branches of the English government with the principal branches of the American. How great the contrast! How wide the difference! The King of Great Britain is independent; The President of the United States is not. The former holds his throne by hereditary right; a right not derived from the consent of the people, nor at the disposal of the people: the latter holds his office by election, and with the consent of the people. The President of the United States, after a short space of time, descends and assumes his place as a private citizen; the King of Great Britain holds his crown and his throne through life. The former is accountable for his conduct and liable to impeachment whenever he violates the laws; the latter is accountable to no human power, nor can he be impeached at any human tribunal. In the king we behold an enormous power, independent and unimpeachable; in the President we behold a power limited by the constitution, and incapable of committing abuses with impunity. Can we descry any resemblance between these two important branches of the American and British governments? Why then all this outcry against the enormous power of our supreme magistrate? Why so many industrious attempts to persuade the people that he is an aspiring monarch? I will tell you: It is because we are blessed with a group of government levellers, who cultivate those all-preserving, democratic virtues, jealousy and ingratitude.

In the government of Great Britain is an inheritable peerage. The lords temporal and spiritual are independent: they hold their seats without the consent of the people, and can hold them against their consent. How different the American Senators! Chosen by the people in a constitutional mode, they are

wholly dependent for their power on the people ; and must, after a prescribed term, revert to their places as private citizens. Great Britain has an house of commons. In this branch lies the only share which the people have in the government, and here their influence is very small. For the commons consist of all such men of property in the kingdom as have not a seat in the house of lords. The knights which represent the counties are chosen by the proprietors of lands ; and the citizens and burgesses, who represent the cities and boroughs, are chosen by the mercantile part of the nation. Hence the inequality of representation is so great in the house of commons, that the people rank this among their greatest grievances. We can discover no resemblance between the British house of commons and our house of representatives. In short, the most important branches of the British government are independent and hereditary : all branches of the American government are dependent and elected. Who but a madman, or an enemy to our country, could have had the effrontery to assert, that our government is formed after the British model ? Our government is our own, and so long as we adhere to it, we shall be a people free, independent, and invincible.

Another sentiment strenuously maintained by the enemies of our government, is, that the union of the states is an affair of occasional convenience or advantage ; and that any State, whenever she sees fit, has a right to denounce the proceedings of Congress, and to secede from the great political body. These positions are advanced with a view to impede the energy of the Federal Government, and even to undermine its foundation. If admitted and reduced to practice, they will render the execution of laws utterly uncertain ; and in case of foreign invasion, will expose the government to destruction and the country to devastation. The advocates of these strange political opinions seem not disposed to profit by past examples. They are like those fanatics who look for all wisdom in themselves ; “and such never fail to find it.” I would cite them to the states of ancient Greece, at the time of the Persian invasion, under Xerxes. Had these states been united under a common government ; had they

been responsible to some supreme controlling power ; they would not, through fear and jealousy, have deserted the public cause, and have left the Athenians and Spartans to oppose the immense army of Asia. One would suppose, that in a time of such pressing danger, a sense of the necessity of indissoluble union, would have had the force of a law, to compel all the states to engage in the common cause. But the reverse took place. The haughty monarch of Persia, taking advantage of the disunion of his enemies, pressed forward, marked his steps with *fire* and *blood*, took the city of Athens, which his general Mardonius, soon after entirely destroyed. This example is a loud warning to us, that a country divided into a number of independent States can have no safety but in union, and no union but in responsibility to a supreme controlling power. I will hazard the assertion, that the States of Greece suffered more from their internal dissensions and divisions, which arose from the want of a Federal Government, possessed of a power over them all, than they did from all their foreign wars. Is it not the part of prudence, to profit by the errors, as well as by the wisdom of past ages ? Is it not the part of folly, in the present advanced state of the science of government, to admit an idea which the example of all the ancient independent republics, reprobates, as the fruitful source of division, violence and destruction ?

Those metaphysic knights in the science of civil policy, who have attempted the subversion of our government, have done no small mischief by the perpetual use of certain words and phrases, which, though they conveyed no definite meaning, yet were calculated like the incantations of magic, to blind, seduce and mislead the unwary. "LIBERTY, EQUALITY, RIGHTS OF MAN ;" these are the ensigns armorial of the whole tribe of political speculatists ; these they hold up to the people, with a view to change real liberty into licentiousness ; real equality into murderous violence ; and the real rights of man into indiscriminate plunder. The indefinite phrase, "*Rights of Man*," seems to imply, that man is born into the world with certain connatural political rights. This cannot be true, for government is the creature of man's invention and wisdom, and is founded on the

compact of men in society. If man has any political rights which he can claim, it is because he is a member of the political system, or a partner in the great community of rights attached to the government under which he lives, whether this government is formed by his contemporaries, or inherited from his ancestors. But man, considered as such, has but one right, that of self-preservation. The phrase, "*Rights of Man*," has been lavishly thrown out in this as well as in other countries, with a view to persuade the people that their government was an arbitrary engrossment of power; that it was an unreasonable restraint on their passions and energies; that as it denied them certain rights which they might claim because they were men, it ought to be demolished and buried in ruin. The direct tendency of the doctrine styled "*Rights of Man*," is to disquiet the people, to set them at variance with their rulers, to fill all the grades of society with an unreasonable jealousy of each other, and to change the order of civil institutions into the anarchy of barbarous association.

Let us for a moment contemplate the magical, wonder-working word, "EQUALITY." This, in the French cavalcade of death, is harnessed up behind liberty. That fair goddess is with reluctance dragged into the train, and thrust forward, that her charms may introduce the infernal procession which troops behind her. The revolutionary demagogues of our country talk much of equality. They assure us, in their indefinite, unqualified language, that all men are equal. To ascertain whether this assertion is true, we must recur to fact and experience. Nature, so far from having made all men equal, has made them very unequal. All men have not the same strength and activity of body—all have not the same endowments and energies of mind. These are facts which speak in a language too plain not to be understood. Nature no where yokes up a dwarf with a giant, or a Newton with an ape. Amidst her mighty profusions of endowments, we discover an instinctive wisdom, fitting the numerous parts of this stupendous whole to their several places; arranging them by orders, differences and contrasts, so as to constitute one perfect system, whose parts are never all young,

nor old, nor equal, but supported in a beautiful diversity through a perpetually dying and reviving universe.

Society no less than nature makes great differences and inequalities among men. When the road to acquisition is equally open to all—when the laws equally protect every man's person and property—all men will not possess the same spirit of enterprise—all will not obtain accession of wealth, of learning, virtue and honor, equally extensive and important. The industrious, prudent citizen, will gain vast quantities of property, while the negligent and idle will remain in the depths of poverty. To the last, the doctrine of equality is like the music of angels. Energized by the sound, he rouses from his lethargy, and revels on the divided spoils of his wealthy neighbor. That men in the social state are equal as to certain rights—that they ought to be protected in their persons and property, while they conduct as good citizens, will undoubtedly be admitted. This, however, is a very different kind of equality from that which the promulgers of this pernicious doctrine intended to introduce. Their schemes of wicked ambition were, to overturn all the established governments in the world, and to obtain an unlimited control over the minds and bodies of men. Nothing could be more immediately conducive to this purpose, than to render all the subordinate ranks of society dissatisfied with their condition. This was to be accomplished by persuading them, that the governments under which they lived were unjust and oppressive; that all religion was a vain and idle superstition; that there was no difference in men, except what arose from arbitrary violence; that the few who had acquired great wealth had no better right to it than the many who had acquired none; and that nothing could restore genuine liberty but the prostration of every dignity and of every advantage, whether derived from the industry of man, or the bounty of God. The advocates of this pernicious system of equality, in the career of their opposition to the laws of nature and society, have expressed their fervent displeasure at that respect which long has been, and I trust long will be, attached to eminent and dignified men, exalted to the higher stations in government. This is an important part in the system of universal disorganization. For if you destroy all res-

pect for magistrates, you destroy all confidence in them ; and leave no security for the existence of liberty or laws. The cry of our levelling democrats is, " respect the majesty of the people."—Where are we to look for the majesty of the people, except in the persons exalted to office by the suffrages of the people ? These are the characters whose public administrations are to shew whether the people have any majesty. The phrase, "majesty of the people," in its modern acceptation, brings into view such an indefinite object, made of every gradation of character, from wisdom to folly, from virtue to vice, from aspiring ambition to brutal stupidity ; that it serves only to perplex the mind, by rendering its views vast and irregular. We hope the American angle of vision is not sufficiently large, to take in that indescribable farrago of majesty, with which our modern levelers are so much enamored. We hope we have still judgment enough to distinguish merit, and gratitude enough to reward it. We are willing that the laws of nature, and the principles of civil association, should still be followed. We have not yet lost all regard for ancient institutions and ancient wisdom. We respect our magistrates ; we esteem and protect the ministers of our holy religion ; we embrace as our brethren all our worthy fellow-citizens ; we form our political system after the great primeval model which descends from the source of infinite wisdom ; which combines in one harmonious whole, principalities and powers, and exhibits in one vast and brilliant assemblage, millions of different dignities, without envy and without revolution. Peace, and order, and rational liberty ; these are the objects to which we are invincibly attached. If once illumined by the transforming doctrine of equality, we shall see the whole establishment of nature reversed. Walking on enchanted ground, we shall see vales usurping the place of mountains ; rivers whirling back to their sources, and skies falling to embrace the earth. We shall see huge whales sporting on the Andes, and clumsy bears flouncing in the Pacific. The planets in their courses will utter censure at their Maker, and the moon will repine at the splendor of the sun. When we are transformed into complete levellers, we can overleap, at one bound, all the mighty differences established by infinite wisdom ; and, without a seeming

disgust at the junction of eternally jarring principles, shall congratulate ourselves that we have escaped the drudgery of human prudence, and emerged into a region of perfect day.

Another cause which has had an extensive influence in producing and propagating erroneous notions respecting the nature of civil government, and which has rendered great numbers of people jealous and unhappy, is either an ignorant or designed misrepresentation of liberty. All restraints on the feelings, passions and actions of men, have been considered as the arbitrary mandates of a tyrant. It has generally been asserted, that when man quits the savage for the social state, he resigns a part of liberty to secure the rest. From this erroneous sentiment have originated the most violent invectives against those measures of government, which limit at a certain boundary the exercise of civil rights, and render men responsible for the abuse of those rights. What liberty has man in the unsocial, uncivilized state? I conceive he has none, which properly comes under the idea of liberty. True he is exempt from the restraints of law : he is also destitute of the protection of law. He consults no will, and no power but his own. Every man, therefore, in an uncivilized state, is either a tyrant or a slave. No one can be sure of the produce of his labor, or of the safety of his person. Visionary theorists may amuse themselves with their pompous descriptions of the liberty of uncovenanted man ; but fact and experience will tell us, that he has no liberty but in a society governed by laws which control every man's will, and protect the weak against the strong. What is called liberty in any other state, is properly the liberty of doing mischief. It is licentiousness or despotism. Government is by no means founded on what are called natural rights, but on conventional agreement. Every man in the uncivil state claims a right to every thing. Of consequence, every man sets himself up for a tyrant. War and bloodshed ensue, till the strongest arm determines whose right is best founded. Every man in the uncivil state claims a right to be the judge of his own cause, and the avenger of his own wrongs. He relinquishes both these rights when he enters into society. He now has a claim to assistance and protection from the aggregate wisdom and force of the com-

munity. Every right which he now possesses, rests on the social compact. He cannot now conduct himself in any way that is repugnant to established laws and constitutions. These prescribe the rights of every individual, and these alone secure genuine civil liberty. In the social state, every man is at liberty without any responsibility to extend and to use his rights, so far as they do not interfere with the rights of others, or with the general good of the community. The moment a man abuses his rights, with respect to the character, persons or property of others, he becomes responsible, and deserves punishment. For if no man is responsible for the abuse of his rights, society and liberty, with all their advantages, are destroyed.

A good government is a system of restraints on the actions and passions of its subjects. All good citizens will rank these restraints among their rights, and not among their grievances. A spirit of rational liberty exults in submission to the control of just and salutary laws. It considers these as its only asylum against violence and outrage. A spirit of licentiousness is impatient of all restraint, delights in perpetual revolutions, and always measures its right by its power. Some of the citizens of these states consider our government as too complex in its structure, and too expensive in its operations. They confidently assure us, that a simple house of representatives with a speaker, would fully answer every object of national importance. The simplest forms of government will generally secure some individual objects better than the more complex ; but they commonly leave the most important concerns unguarded. Every one who is versed in the political histories of nations, knows that the ends to be obtained by government are numerous, often difficult of access, and, when obtained, difficult to be secured. No simple direction of power can possibly be accommodated to the complexity of human affairs. Hence it is that the due distribution of powers, so as to secure the greatest number of advantages, with the fewest inconveniences, has been considered, by the most profound politicians, as the most difficult part in the mechanism of civil institutions. In governments where there is but one branch of

power, there is no security for liberty. Simple democracies, whether managed by the whole people assembled, or by their representatives, have always proved as tyrannical as the most despotic monarchies, and vastly more mischievous. It is in vain to substitute theoretical speculations in the place of facts. The modern zealots of revolutionary reform may tell us that the science of government is of all others the most simple; that a nation, in order to be free, needs only an exertion of will; but the experience of ancient and modern times will tell us that the science of government is of all others the most intricate; because it is to be deduced from principles which nothing but experiment can develop: and that a nation, in order to be free, needs some wisdom as well as will. But our reeking demagogues, in order to accomplish their designs of demolishing all permanent establishments, address themselves to the stubborn principle of will, and guide it, not by convincing the understanding—not by presenting a certain prospect of improved liberty and happiness—but by irritating the feelings, rousing up the passions, and loading the soul with a sense of unreal grievances.

The enemies of our own and of all other established governments, in order to give complete success to their schemes of destruction, have attempted to exterminate all religious and moral principles. They well knew, that if men would not fear and obey the Supreme Being, they would not any subordinate being. Hence it is, that such efforts have been made to discredit the doctrines of natural and revealed religion. Hence it is, that cargoes of infidelity have been imported into our country, and industriously circulated to corrupt the minds and morals of the rising generation. Efface the idea of a supreme controlling power from the minds of men and you leave none of those exalted motives, none of those aspiring principles of perfection, which have excited, adorned and animated the greatest geniuses of ancient and modern times. No government, except absolute despotism, can support itself over a people destitute of religion; because such a people possesses no principles on which governmental motives can operate to secure obedience. The most salutary laws can have no effect against general corruption of

sentiments and morals. The American people, therefore, have no way to secure their liberty, but by securing their religion; for there is no medium between an entire destitution of religion and the most deplorable servitude. No nation, however ignorant and barbarous, except one, has ever attempted to support a government without some respect to a Supreme Being. Let us then guard with the utmost vigilance against those domineering, abandoned and arrogant philosophists, who consider themselves as the asylums of wisdom, and the oracles of truth; who assert that there is no standard of moral rectitude; and are striving to persuade man, that to be perfect, he needs only forget every thing exterior to himself, and suffer all his actions to be guided by the impulses of his own nature. These sentiments if reduced to practice, will undoubtedly destroy all moral, civil and social obligations. For how can men form societies, institute governments, and cultivate arts and sciences, who will be guided by no laws, and controlled by no power out of themselves? Each one considers himself a deity, and yet conducts like a brute! Each is an instinctive animal, and yet a perfect intelligence! Such are the effects of renouncing religion—of substituting speculation in the room of experience!

We are called upon as citizens and as men, by the highest motives of duty, interest and happiness, to resist the innovations attempted on our government; to cultivate in ourselves and others the genuine sentiments of liberty, patriotism and virtue. After a long series of peace, prosperity and happiness, you are threatened with all the horrors and cruelties of war. The tempest thickens around you, and the thunder already begins to roar. A nation hardened in the science of human butchery; accustomed to victory and plunder; exonerated from all those restraints by which civilized nations are governed, lifts over your heads the iron sceptre of despotic power. To terrify you into an unmanly submission, she holds up to your view Venice, shorn of her glory; Holland, robbed, degraded and debased; Switzerland, with her desolated fields, smoking villages and lofty cliffs, reeking in blood amidst the clouds. In the full prospect of this mighty group, this thickening battalion of horrors, call up all your courage; fly back to the consecrated altar

of your liberty, and while your souls kindle at the hallowed fire, invigorate your attachment to the birth-day of your independence ; to the government of your choice ; feel with additional weight the necessity of united wisdom, councils and exertions, and vow to the God of your fathers, that your lives and fortunes ; that every thing you esteem sacred and dear ; that all your energies and resources, both of body and mind, are indissolubly bound to your sovereignty and freedom. On all sides you now behold the most energetic measures of defence. All is full of life, and ardor, and zeal. The brave youth, the flower and strength of our country, rush into the field, and the eye of immortal WASHINGTON lightens along their embattled ranks. Approach these hallowed shores, ye butchers, who have slaughtered half Europe—you will find every defile a THERMOPYLÆ, and every plain a MARATHON !—We already behold our fleet whitening the clouds with its canvass, and sweeping the ocean with its thunder. The Gallic flag drops to American valor, and our intrepid sailors sing victory in the midst of the tempest. —Brave men ! you will fight for your country while an inch of sinew stretches on your bones, or a drop of blood throbs in your veins !—Fellow Citizens, it is not by tribute, it is not by submission—it is by resolution, it is by courage, that we are to save our country. Let our efforts and our wisdom concentrate in the common cause, and shew to the world, that we are worthy that freedom which was won by the valor and blood of our fathers. Let our government, our religion and our liberty, fostered by our care, and protected by our exertions, descend through the long range of succeeding ages, till all the pride and presumption of human arrangements shall bow to the empire of universal love, and the glory of all sublunary grandeur be forever extinguished.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

TO A COURSE ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF

RHETORIC AND CRITICISM;

DESIGNED FOR THE

SENIOR CLASS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE,

AND DELIVERED IN THE PUBLIC CHAPEL ON WEDNESDAY,

APRIL 8, 1817.

As the following lecture contains a number of important positions, with regard to the grounds and principles of Philosophical Criticism; the nature, use, and end of language; positions, to which I shall have frequent occasions to recur, I judged it expedient to procure a few copies struck off at the press, solely for the use of my pupils. By having the Lecture before them, they will easily make themselves masters of its contents; and will thus be prepared to comprehend and retain with much greater facility, my subsequent instructions.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

My principal object, in the following course of lectures, is to unfold the principles of rhetoric and philosophical criticism. To do this in a manner satisfactory to men of profound erudition, of extensive research and cultivated taste, requires abilities and resources, to which I can have but small pretensions. On subjects which have been so frequently and so learnedly treated, little of novelty ; little of originality, is to be expected. If by bringing into view and reducing to a scientific system those principles, on which the art of rhetoric is founded, and from which the rules to guide us to just decisions in the productions of genius and taste, are derived, I can be so fortunate as to excite the curiosity of my pupils ; to enlist their ambition in the attractive pursuits of polite learning ; to improve their taste and enliven their genius ; to expedite the evolution and cultivation of their mental powers ; to accelerate their progress in elegant literature and genuine philosophy ; my ambition will be gratified, and my labors rewarded.

Rhetoric, or oratory is the art of speaking, so as to convince and persuade. From its very nature and end, therefore, it addresses not only the understanding, but the will. Its province is not only to present truth, and duty, and interest, to the intellectual powers so as to convince, but to the active and moral, so as to persuade. When we consider man merely as a contempla-

tive philosopher, it is sufficient, that his understanding be enlightened ; but when we consider him as an accountable being endowed with passions, with moral feelings and active energies ; a being stationed in society where he has various obligations to fulfil, weighty duties to discharge, high interests to pursue ; a being possessed of elective and conscientious faculties ; who can recognize himself when he acts, and can feel the obligatory force of law ; a being, who by his own powers can forward the perfection of his nature, beyond any assignable limits, and by the practice of virtue can secure the enjoyment of endless felicity ; when we consider man in these respects, we feel the want of something more than a cold display of truth ; we feel the necessity of engaging his sensibility by spreading before him the charms of beauty ; of rousing up his imagination, by all that is grand, sublime and awful ; of firing his passions, and through these, engaging all his powers of body and mind, in supporting truth and virtue, and branding vice and falsehood with eternal infamy. The orator's skill consists in a great degree in working on the active powers of man. He ought to be thoroughly acquainted with all the springs of human action. He must pry into the inmost recesses of the heart, and fully understand the passions, the laws of their growth, continuance and decay ; their innumerable modifications in the innumerable and ever varying circumstances and characters of men. In short, he must thoroughly understand the sensitive branch of man's nature ; for here we are ultimately to look for all those laws which ought to govern the productions of genius in History, Poetry, and Eloquence, so far as the manner of their execution is concerned. No one will understand the art of rhetoric, unless he traces it up to its scientific principles. These undoubtedly exist in the nature of man, and he who is ignorant of them, can neither judge with accuracy, nor execute with skill and success. Art is nature methodized. Indeed we may safely assert, that, the principles of all arts and sciences exist in nature. To develop these, is the province of the philosopher. Let us now for a moment turn our attention to Philosophical Criticism. By this we are to understand application of scientific principles to the productions of art and genius, with a view to ascertain the

beauties and defects of the latter, and to adjust their intrinsic and comparative merits.—There can be no ground for criticism unless there is a standard to which the productions of art ought to conform.

The powers of taste render us sensible to the impressions of beauty; and so far as these impressions are made by art, the powers of intellect, enable us to assign the reasons of them, and to refer them to their legitimate origin. Hence the study of scientific criticism becomes an interesting and noble employment, suited to the nature of man, calculated to furnish him with the most valuable knowledge, that of himself; calculated to yield the purest pleasures, to elevate him in the scale of being by refining his sensibility, and invigorating his understanding.

From this slight sketch, you will readily perceive that the principles of Oratory and Criticism virtually embrace the principles of all those arts which are denominated fine. For the productions of these are all addressed to man as a being, endowed with reason, sensibility to beauty, imagination and passions. More effectually to excite your attention, and enable you to appreciate the importance of the subjects of the following lectures, I shall now briefly point out some of the advantages which may be expected from a scientific study of the principles of rhetoric and criticism.

This study will enable us more fully to comprehend the nature of language, and to estimate its great importance and use. Language has by universal consent, become the universal vehicle of knowledge. Words, when spoken, are addressed to the ear, and are signs of ideas; but when written, are addressed to the eye, and are signs of articulate sounds.

Words do not answer their end in the same manner as pictures do: they are not to be considered as representative substitutions, formed on the principle of resemblance; but as arbitrary signs adopted by voluntary convention. Words when spoken or written, do not convey ideas to the mind by imitation or picture; but by suggestion. By the habit of connecting a particular idea with a particular word, a connexion so intimate is formed between them, that as soon as the latter is spoken or written, the former enters the mind. The expressive power of

words depends almost entirely on this connection. It must, however, be remembered that the meaning of words is often greatly altered by the particular place which they happen to occupy in discourse. Superficial or careless thinkers, are very apt to suppose that every word in a discourse stands for a particular idea. So far is this from the truth, that many words will be found to derive their whole meaning from the place they occupy and the relation they sustain to others. On slight reflection we are apt to suppose that, that language would be the most perfect which had a particular word for every idea, but experience will soon convince us that, that very circumstance would render a language almost useless. It would not answer even the purposes of social intercourse; much less of science and ratiocination.

Let any one make the experiment, let him attempt to carry on a train of reasoning or discourse, without the use of what are called complex or general terms; and instead of these, let him give a distinct enumeration of all the parts of the complex or general ideas for which those terms stand; he will soon find his words so numerous, and his circumlocutions so embarrassing, that he will be bewildered and lost amidst his own effort, and utterly incapable of advancing. Hence it is, that in all languages, nearly all the words are general; they are universal terms expressive of the highest genera, or most extensive comprehensions. It may then be asked—How then can particulars be expressed? I answer, by making a skilful use of the wonderful arts of speech, by which the meaning of words is appropriated, limited and modified, according to the various exigencies of the mind. Hence we see the vast importance of thoroughly studying the principles of Grammar. These by some philosophers have been compared to the foundation of a palace, which, though it is the most important part, and sustains the whole superstructure, is nevertheless most out of sight, and least noticed. Language is so familiar to us from our infancy, that we are apt to consider the particular study of it as unnecessary and useless.—Why should we waste our time in learning words? Permit me to say, that if you learn words as you ought to, you will learn things, and things of the highest importance.

Language is a most wonderful art, the greatest of all arts. It was invented by the mind to expedite its own purposes, and to improve its own powers. Hence the principles and laws of mind pervade the structure, and govern the modification of language. Hence, while you are studying words, if you study them as a philosopher does, you are studying the powers, laws, and operations of mind ; you are studying a science which unfolds the principles, and prescribes the laws and rules of all arts and sciences.

Let those therefore who affect to look with contempt on the study of languages, remember that they betray their own ignorance of the most sublime pursuits that ever occupied the mind of man. So intimate is the connexion between science and a well arranged language, that some have asserted that to learn a science was only to learn a language. Words were first used merely for the communication of thoughts and sentiments. As the social state advanced in civilization and refinement ; as the increasing exigencies of man called forth his corporeal and mental exertions ; as arts and sciences grew and flourished ; words multiplied, new modes of phraseology were invented, until language became what we now find it, a wonderful instrument of of art, to aid the intellectual powers in the acquisition, retention and communication of knowledge. The study of language when considered as an instrument of thought, is highly curious and interesting. The advantages of it as a vehicle of our thoughts to others are obvious ; but its use as an aid to our mental operations and processes of solitary speculation, is not so obvious ; though equally great and more indispensable.

The next advantage arising from the scientific study of Rhetoric and Criticism is, that it will furnish us with a more perfect knowledge of our internal constitution, and enable us more effectually to cultivate and improve our intellectual powers. Though truth is, in its nature uniform, yet in its appearance, it is various. Hence in our inquiries after it, we are obliged to adopt different modes of investigation, and to recur to different sources of evidence. In matters of pure abstract science, all we require is consistency in the mind's conception.—In things of an historical nature we recur to testimony. In things belong-

ing to mind, its various modifications and passions ! its laws and powers ; we recur to consciousness. As to the existence and reality of material things, we recur to our external senses. In estimating the productions of genius in literature and in the fine arts, we recur to taste. This, however, is not to be considered as a simple power, a mere sensibility to beauty ; but as a complex faculty, the result of various mental powers highly improved. Taste is not merely sensitive, but discerning. In literature, it implies a clear, lively and distinct discernment of all that is true, just and beautiful in sentiment and style. The operations of intellect are involved in all the just decisions of taste. The power of taste is therefore to be considered as a discerning faculty, a kind of natural reason and sensibility wrought up to perfection by exercise and study. It is not confined to literature ; it extends to all arts and sciences, and to all branches of knowledge, assigning to each its appropriate and comparative merit ; pointing out what is beautiful and useful in each, pruning what is redundant, supplying what is deficient ; and though infinitely diversified in its principle, yet always preserving the beautiful and the true in each kind, and on every subject dispensing the graces of style with prudence and wisdom. In critical examinations of the productions of genius, in History, Poetry, and Eloquence, we constantly recur to the powers, laws, and operations of mind. No exercise, therefore, is better calculated to cultivate the principles of taste than Philosophical Criticism. None is better calculated to enlarge and perfect our knowledge of mind. Here are we to look for the origin of all those charms for which the works of Genius in the fine arts and in oratorical composition are distinguished. Genuine Criticism requires the union of Truth and Taste, and refers all that is really elegant and sublime in composition, to the principles of a sound logic.

Nothing excellent, orderly or beautiful, was ever produced by chance. It is mind that creates, inspires, adorns and governs all things. The object of all genuine philosophy, is the investigation of principles, and the application of these to the explanation of Phenomena. Principles are of two kinds, experimental and rational. The former are general facts, found by observation universally to obtain, and are referred to as data, to explain

other facts which they involve. These principles are obtained by experiment and by observation of facts. The method of proceeding is, in modern physics by analysis, which resolves the compound forms of matter and motion, into their constituent, elementary parts. What is called natural philosophy, appears to me more properly denominated natural history ; since it takes facts, and not causes, for principles.

This is indeed, all that physics can do ; for its legitimate object, is not to find out necessary connections, but constant conjunctions ; not to investigate elementary causes ; but to exhibit sensible facts. But we must remember that facts are not, philosophically speaking, principles ; but effects, which flow from them. True philosophy takes an higher aim. Her objects are powers and primary causes ; and these she obtains by a regular analysis. Rational principles are obtained by the exercise of our intellectual faculties, in analysing the conceptions of the understanding, whose evidence rests on intuitive perceptions. In this mode of proceeding, we have as much certainty as we can have by experiment ; for we are not more certain of our existence, than we are of the perceptions of our own minds. Experiments may present facts to the understanding, but cannot develope principles ; these lie beyond the region of sense, and must be sought for by reason ; for this is the proper instrument of all truth. While investigating the philosophical principles of Rhetoric and Criticism, we are occupied with mental phenomena. These are proper subjects of observation, and contain in them, the principles of all our knowledge of mind, as much as the appearances of the visible world contain the principles of all our knowledge of matter. Hence, Criticism assumes a scientific form, and rests on a basis not less certain, than that of natural philosophy. To the young, the study of Rhetoric and Criticism, is vastly more attractive than that of the abstract sciences ; and eminently calculated to excite their curiosity, to evolve, invigorate and perfect the intellectual powers.

The pleasures of these elegant pursuits, are less remote than those of pure intellect, from the province of sense and imagination ; are enjoyed with less effort of abstraction ; and by constantly exercising the powers of taste, diminish the fatigue of

mental labor ; and while they enliven and expand the imagination, by presenting the attractions of beauty, they excite and invigorate the powers of the understanding, by a rigid discipline in practical Logic. On subjects naturally agreeable, habits of reasoning are insensibly formed, and the mind gradually prepared for the highest exertions of intellect. By a constant reference to the laws and powers of the human mind, we acquire an extensive knowledge of this subject, and lay a sure foundation for a more just and rational mode of education. In the midst of our favorable anticipations of future improvement, we must be cautious in Rhetoric and Criticism, not to attribute too much efficacy to rules and precepts. Nature must lay the foundation of all that is truly excellent and meritorious. Every man is undoubtedly born with the germs of all the powers which he ever afterwards displays. Art may improve the gifts, but can never supply the barrenness of nature. All our powers exist in a state of mere capacity ; subsequent occurrences and exigencies call them forth into energy. Had we the means of accurate and continued observation, it is probable that every man would appear equally great, in every period of life. The utility of rules consists in this, that by directing our exertions in a proper train, they will enable us to compass their objects with the fewest errors, and the most complete success.

We greatly err, if we imagine that the first poets, orators and historians, were formed by the scientific system of philosophers and critics.

On the contrary, the first great writers, by the unaided productions of their own genius, gave rise to criticism. Ancient Greece in her happiest days was, the seat of learning, civility and arts. A crowd of illustrious performers burst at once on the view, and by the mighty toils of genius, astonished and delighted their cotemporaries. The Greek philosophers the subtle investigators of principles, were led to pry into the causes of these wonderful effects. Hence, among them, criticism was a deep and thorough search into the principles of good writing so far as these were sanctioned by existing productions. Aristotle, the systematiser of Plato, in his treatises on rhetoric and poetry, unfolded with wonderful penetration, the elementary principles

of these arts. He reduced criticism to a scientific form, and presented its principles in such an alliance with philosophy, that we can call it by no better name than philosophical criticism. He united truth and taste, blended the light of reason, with the graces of beauty; and added the completions of art to the inventions of genius. Criticism opened a most extensive field and presented as objects of investigation, the nature of man, his intellect, imagination, passions and the innumerable modifications of character of which he is susceptible in every stage of life, and in every condition of society.

Hence all the means were explored, by which the orator, the poet and the historian, accomplished their several objects. Words became objects of high consideration and subjects of critical scrutiny. They were distributed into their various kinds; their powers in numerous composition both in poetry and prose, were ascertained and their meaning defined. Inquiries were instituted into the various sources from which materials were to be drawn, to enlighten the understanding, to excite and allay the passions. Thus philosophical criticism opened a vast field of inquiry for the grammarian, the rhetorician, the orator, the logician and the moralist. From this view of the subject it appears, that language is, in its structure so interwoven with the laws and powers of mind, that a true knowledge of the former, implies a knowledge of the latter; and that grammar, rhetoric and logic, are so nearly united, that they are more properly degrees of the same, than systems of different sciences. In various instances, our corporeal and mental powers appear to be subjected to the same laws, and to be susceptible of improvement from the same methods of discipline. It is universally admitted, as a truth that all our powers both of body and mind gain strength by exercise. This is abundantly evident in the wonderful facility and dexterity produced by exercise in all mechanical operations. Philosophy as yet, has done but little towards furnishing a rational method of improving the mind.

All that has been heretofore done on this subject, is merely tentative; nor can much farther be expected, until the powers and laws of the human mind, are more thoroughly explored, and more clearly developed. When this shall be accomplished,

it will not be deemed extravagant to hope, that such efficacious methods of exercise and discipline, will be devised, as will communicate strength and skill, with as much certainty and success to our mental, as to our corporeal powers. Of this we shall find little reason to doubt, when we consider that wonderful part of man's constitution, by which he is susceptible of habit.—How this gains ground and is established either in body or mind, it is perhaps impossible for us to say, except, that such is the will of God. The fact is undeniable; and is the only ground of all our ability and skill in corporeal or intellectual operations. Susceptibility of habit, distinguishes man from all other animals, no less than his intellect and moral sense. Some animals are in a degree capable of an increased facility in performing certain mechanical operations; but they are wholly incapable of those high attainments which result from invention and voluntary discipline. None of the lower classes of animals can improve on their own productions, or on those of their predecessors. Their first effort of skill, is as perfect as their last.—Man alone has the power of forwarding the perfection of his nature beyond any assignable limits, by the voluntary exercise and discipline of his own powers.

By blending with the study of mental philosophy, those arts, whose principal object is beauty, we may reasonably expect, that the former will be pursued with greater ardor, and be crowned with greater success; that more judicious methods of instruction and discipline will be invented, and all intellectual powers more completely evolved, and carried to their highest degree of perfection.

Another benefit resulting from the scientific study of rhetoric and criticism, is, that it will enable us to cultivate with greater hopes of success, the most valuable of all arts, oratory.

The high importance and extensive utility of this, are universally admitted. We should therefore justly expect, that oratory would be studied and cultivated with the greatest assiduity and zeal; and that no means would be left untried to facilitate its acquisition. So far from this, we scarcely find it made a part of the course of education, pursued in our public Colleges and Universities. Scarce an instance can be found, in which even

a single Professorship is instituted, for the cultivation of this sublime and noble art. Neither public patronage, nor private munificence, has yet called forth the efforts of the learned and ingenious, for reviving and improving the study and practice of eloquence.

From considering the neglect and degradation of oratory, we should suspect either, that the subject itself were embarrassed with insurmountable obstacles ; or that the ends of this art could be obtained by means less expensive and laborious. It is a position generally admitted, that eloquence will flourish, in every nation, in proportion as the government is free. The first governments instituted over men, were despotic monarchies. In these the people felt no interest.

They had no share in the public concerns of the state ; they were treated as inferior beings, crushed under the arm of power, and swayed by fear. The annals of the world furnish no trace of eloquence, until we come to the Democratic States of Ancient Greece. Here the affairs of the state, were deliberated on, discussed and decided, in the assemblies of the whole people. He who could have most influence in these, was master of the State. Here fame, wealth, honor, and power waited on the steps of the orator. Place men in the same political situation, in any other age or country, and the same effects will follow. It must however be observed, that such governments as the petty democracies of ancient Greece, are utterly impracticable, among people spread over extensive districts of territory, representative governments can never be so free, nor can they be so tyrannical, as small democracies.

Such governments as those of the individual, and of the United States, possess as high a degree of freedom as is practicable, or desirable ; and afford ample scope for the powers of the orator. We must not, however, expect that the world in her old age, when the sciences have gained the ascendancy over the arts ; when men are swayed more by reason and judgment, than by fancy and passion, will bring forth such vigorous children, as in the days of her youthful maturity. Among the various causes which might be assigned for the decay of oratory in modern times, I shall mention only one ; I mean the neglect of

the language of the fancy and passions. Language, in its common acceptation, is limited to words, either written or spoken. Language thus understood would probably answer every purpose, did man possess no power but intellect. This however is far from being the case. He possesses fancy and passions. These constitute a most interesting branch of his nature. They are furnished by nature with a language peculiar to themselves; a language which without art or study instantly expresses all their impulses, movements and modifications. On this language depends all that is forcible, affecting and sublime in oratory.—Words are sufficient to convey what are called ideas, but are absolutely incapable of expressing our internal feelings, sentiments and passions.

Words of course cannot supply the exigencies of the orator, since they furnish him with no means of operating on the active powers of man. It may then be enquired, what more is wanted? I answer the language of looks, tones and gestures. These constitute a natural language formed by God himself, and intelligible to all men, in all ages, and nations. By looks and gestures only, all that passes in the mind, may be completely conveyed. For the truth of this, I appeal to the ancient pantomimic representations. In these, not a word was spoken; the spectators were interested, agitated, transported; they laughed, wept, rejoiced, and felt by turns all the passions and sentiments peculiar to man. It was even a contest, between the great Roman Orator and Roscius which could express a sentiment most forcibly, the former by words, or the latter by look and gestures. Thus, we may safely assert, that words are not even an indispensable part of language; and yet this is all or nearly all, to which the modern teachers of eloquence pay any attention. No wonder that eloquence is not heard when she has lost her tongue! Can this be restored? Undoubtedly it can. What has been done once, can be done again. The ancients perfectly understood this language. All that is now wanted to revive it, is the attention and labor of ingenious men, to copy it from nature and reduce it to system.

Looks and gestures, constitute a language of external signs. These are the work of Nature herself, and they exactly corres-

pond to their internal cause. All men, from their birth, know this language, and can with the utmost certainty and facility, refer every external sign, to its internal principle. This is more evident with respect to the more vigorous emotions and passions.

These are marked with a distinct sign which is never misunderstood either in kind or degree. The other less vigorous are marked by a common sign sufficiently distinct and legible to indicate their nature. One who has not paid particular attention to this subject, will not readily believe or conceive the exact harmony, with which the external form and powers of man are adjusted to his internal sentiments and passions. What internal feeling, passion, or sentiment, cannot readily and clearly be pointed out, by the motions of the hand, head, eyes ; in short, by all the features of the countenance, and by all the attitudes of the body ? To these add the expressive power of tones. These vary and modify, almost indefinitely, the meaning and force of any form of words. The accounts of the effects of Ancient Oratory seem incredible ; but when we consider what a powerful instrument language was, as used by the Ancients, consisting of words the most expressive, delivered in tones suggested by the sentiment, and these all accompanied by looks and gestures, each of which would constitute a powerful medium of conveyance ; our incredulity will vanish, and we shall be filled with astonishment and admiration at human skill and genius. While destitute of the knowledge and use of language in its fullest extent, we are ignorant of some of our noblest powers, and deprived of some of the highest enjoyments of which we are capable. That part of our constitution which is the seat of the fancy and passions, is at present almost wholly barren, and uncultivated. These limbs of our constitution, which have withered in a palsy, of two thousand years, must be revived by the galvanic pile of wealth, and honor and fame, and restored to the pristine health and vigor.

Let the youth under the most accomplished rhetorical teachers be carried through as long a series of laborious exercises, as those who are destined for mechanical labor ; and we need not despair to see another Cicero and Demosthenes.

The scientific study of rhetoric and criticism, will keep alive

all their subsidiary branches of literature and science, and by promoting a taste for all the arts of elegance and beauty, will contribute to individual happiness and public prosperity. Having delivered what I propose as an introduction to a course of lectures to the senior class of this college, I now come to a close lest I should trespass upon the patience of my audience.

A P P E N D I X.

THE REV. ASA MESSER, D. D., LL. D., late President of Brown University, published several occasional Sermons, Orations, and Addresses, which are full of that sound, practical wisdom for which he was so eminently distinguished. The Editor believes he shall gratify Dr. Messer's numerous pupils and friends, as well as the reading public generally, by adding the following Addresses which are a fair specimen of the other productions of his powerful pen. His conceptions strong, distinct and animated, are expressed in a style terse, simple, and vigorous.

AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE
GRADUATES OF BROWN UNIVERSITY,
AT THE
COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 4, 1811.

BY ASA MESSER, D. D.,
PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

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AN ADDRESS.*

YOUR future prosperity, Young Gentlemen, will greatly depend on your choice of a profession for life. Should you choose no profession at all, you would, having no stimulus, be likely to live with no industry or enterprise; and of course with no usefulness, respectability, or satisfaction. Should you, while nature would give you one profession, give yourselves another, this might be even worse than none at all: it might keep you ever struggling both against wind and tide. It is hence important that you should ascertain the profession which nature would give you.

Nature, Young Gentlemen, will never work contradictions: she will never build castles in the air: she will never require you to move the world, unless she will allow you a place to stand on: she will never give you a birth, which she will not fit you to fill.

On what profession, then, do you think of entering? Do any of you think of entering on the profession of Law? This profession undoubtedly stands near the door of promotion. Men educated in the school of law will ever fill the high offices of our nation. From them the President of the United States, the Secretaries, the Ambassadors, the Judges, and a great portion

* This Address is now first published from the original manuscript.

of the members of Congress will generally be selected. By them therefore, notwithstanding the excellent republican form of our government, the important destinies of our nation will actually be directed. By them will be decided the great questions of national policy, whether we will have peace or war? whether we will assert our rights, or neglect them? whether we will follow the direction of others, or of ourselves? whether we will go on to perfection with that political system which is portrayed and guaranteed in the great charter of our nation, or abandon it like a rotten vessel unfit to stem the billows of the deep? whether, in fact, we will merit the blessed privileges of freedom, or the cursed privileges of slavery?—

By them also, especially through the medium of the press, will that public opinion be always, in a great measure, guided, which itself will always in a great measure, guide all our civil policy: so that in the legal profession, we may expect ever to find our most influential agents, as well in the election of our rulers, as in the enactment and execution of our laws.

By them, moreover, better perhaps than by any other men, may those oppressions be prevented or redressed, which spring from the avarice or malignity of private persons; and these, though they may make less uproar, may not make less mischief than those which spring from the ambition or madness of public rulers. Superadded, therefore to your desire of promotion, principles of patriotism and of benevolence might induce you to turn your attention to the pursuits of the bar.

Notwithstanding all this, I would, however, advise you to make inquiry, whether you possess the qualifications which may enable you to discharge with honor the arduous duties of this profession? whether you possess the genius, the acumen, the studiousness, and the perseverance so indispensable in the character of a lawyer? And whether also you possess the general inclination and habits which harmonize with the general business of the profession? Destitute of these you should not allow yourselves to doubt in the case. The voice of nature, which is the voice of God himself, will forbid you to expect celebrity either in the study or the practice of Law.

Should you, after all, actually make choice of this respecta-

ble profession, I would remind you that, following the proper design of it, you will stand the avowed patrons and advocates of the principles of justice. Never, then, Young Gentlemen, never allow a violation of them in yourselves ; and never advise it in others. Never allow yourselves to stand on the side of unrighteousness. Never allow yourselves to assist a villain to cover the wages of his wickedness, or to screen himself from the righteous penalty of the Law. In favor of the man, who, by fraud, keeps back the wages of the hireling, or the mite of the widow, or the crumb of the orphan, never allow yourselves to make a plea any sooner than in favor of the Neros, the Caligulas, or the Alexanders of the earth.

Should you, having chosen this profession, choose also to direct the influence it may give you to the direction of the public opinion, and of the consequent civil policy of the nation. I would also remind you that even here you should still stand the avowed advocates of the same principles ; and hence I would also exhort you ever to defend and to promote the great principles of our government, the principles of civil and religious freedom ; for they all stand on the ground of inflexible justice. I would especially exhort you ever to keep burning in your own breasts that patriotic fire which was ever burning in the breasts of the great pillars of the American liberty and Independence ; and, amidst all the contentions of party politics, ever to hold your fellow citizens as members of the same family with yourselves, and never to allow to any other nation the right of abusing, or controlling, or directing your own.

Do any of you think of entering on the profession of Theology ? This, indeed, is a noble profession. The glorious gospel of the blessed God exhibits the greatest blessings ever given to man. What blessings can possibly be greater than the pardon of sin and the justification by grace flowing in the blood of the everlasting covenant ? Than the restoration to the favor of God, the consolations of his love, the joys of his salvation, the glories of his kingdom, promised in the the gospel to all the followers of the Lamb ? What service can possibly be more dignified, more valuable, or benevolent than to proclaim these inestimable blessings to the guilty children of men ! The service of the

faithful preacher of the gospel we may venture to say, is, of all the services he can perform, the most consoling to himself, the most beneficial to others, the most acceptable to God.—To the proper performance of this service, however, peculiar, important qualifications are indispensably necessary; and of these a most essential and prominent one is a moral taste congenial with the doctrine of the gospel. A preacher destitute of this, can never discharge his duty either with pleasure to himself, or with profit to others. To a thoughtless worldling, or a giddy sensualist, or a vain, unprincipled man of honor, what but irksome drudgeries must be the solemn duties devolved on every preacher, of comforting the mournful, of visiting the sick and the dying, of binding up the broken in heart, of proclaiming liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, of standing as a pillar in the house of God, and discussing, defending and enforcing the awful, important truths of our holy religion? And how by such a man can these solemn duties, if discharged at all, be discharged with advantage? In general also, especially in this country, the services, however worthy or faithful, of a great portion of our preachers, will command but very moderate compensations. If money, indeed, is your object, you may gain it better by plowing than preaching. Unless, then, you heartily love the doctrine of the glorious gospel, and heartily desire to proclaim it among your fellow men; if you feel no conviction of duty in the case, no necessity laid upon you to preach the gospel, and no woe denounced against you, if you preach not the gospel, even worldly principles, and much more the principles of religion, but especially the awful woe which religion denounces against those who run when not sent, should induce you to seek a living in almost any profession sooner than in the profession of Theology.

This sacred profession, should any of you follow it, will require you to stand as *the defence of the gospel*, as *the pillars and ground of truth*. Should you, then, be afraid of the truth, or ashamed of it? Should you in any case strive to keep the truth at the bottom of the well, or to bar up the way against the progress of it? As the pillars and ground of truth you should ever stand prepared to meet it, to defend it, to enforce it, to follow

it; and you should never willingly allow it to be held in bondage, or in disgrace by any of the dogmas, or traditions, or authorities of men. You here should allow nothing but a sense of duty to carry you into the field of theological controversy: for then you will be liable to sacrifice the truth of God, not less than the love and peace of men. And you should avoid, or give up all the principles or practices, which, however favorable to your friends or yourselves, stand not on the ground of truth, and tend not to the defence of the gospel. You should, therefore, cherish in yourselves the meekness, the candor, the charity, and the forbearance, not less than the ardor, the industry, the faithfulness and the perseverance so remarkable in the lives of the primitive preachers.

Let you follow what profession you may, I hope you will still stand the patrons and advocates of the Christian religion. This was the religion of the venerable fathers of our country. For the peaceable, unmolested enjoyment of it, they left their native land, crossed a boisterous ocean, and settled in a howling wilderness. Here the combined horrors of famine, wild beasts and savage men could not lessen their zeal for the welfare of this holy religion. They made it, like their daily bread, a subject of their daily prayers; and in all their arrangements for the future prosperity of the New World, they made the prosperity of their religion a primary object of their attention. Their sons followed their example; and hence some traits of this blessed religion are now apparent in almost all the valuable institutions of our country. The extinction, therefore, of this religion among us would be attended with very extensive and painful innovations; at least with a radical, if not horrible change in our systems of education, in our schools, in our colleges, in our libraries and literary societies, and in our habits of thinking, of talking and of reading, as well as with an entire subversion of our houses of worship, of our religious societies and of our assemblies for praying, preaching, and hearing, and an entire relinquishment of our arts of devotion whether in the family, at the table, at the bed of sickness, or in the house of death. Could a patriot desire innovations like these? Would they not endanger our morals, our freedom, our safety? Would they

not fill our land with barbarous cruelty, with horrible licentiousness? And would they not render it more fit to be the land of any other set of men, than the land of the devout, puritanical founders of New England. As long as you live, I beg you, Young Gentlemen, to remember, that a primary reason both for the first settlement of this country, and for its subsequent growth and prosperity must be found in an ardent attachment to the Christian religion. Both your filial, and your patriotic affections might, therefore, induce you to respect and befriend the religion of Jesus.

This religion, moreover, is the religion of God himself, the Father of lights, the great Father of you all; and in your belief and practice of it He has suspended your everlasting welfare. Ought you to doubt a moment whether you will revere or obey a religion like this? a religion revered and obeyed by the first and the best men in the land, and fitted to render it forever a land of justice, order, freedom and safety; of truth, peace, love and joy? a religion sanctioned by the supreme Jehovah, flowing from the spring of all perfection, and rendering benevolent and happy all its followers? and a religion too, which, should you all possess it, would bind you all indissolubly together, though scattered among the remotest nations, would finally bring you all, glorified class-mates, immortal, blessed brothers, into a land of perfect, unchanging friendship and pleasure? No, my young friends, God forbid; and I exhort you, now in the last words of this address, to measure your progress in moral worth only by your progress in Christian love.

A
DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED IN THE
CHAPEL OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
TO THE
SENIOR CLASS, ON THE SUNDAY
PRECEDING THEIR
COMMENCEMENT,
1799.

BY ASA MESSER, A. M.
PROFESSOR OF THE LEARNED LANGUAGES.

To the Young Gentlemen of the Senior Class, at whose request this Discourse was both delivered and published, it is now most cheerfully dedicated, with ardent wishes for their rapid growth in science, virtue, and happiness ; by their most sincere and hearty friend,

ASA MESSER.

A DISCOURSE.

As this is the last time, my friends, young men of the Senior Class, in which I shall publicly address you as members of this institution; and probably the last time, indeed, in which I shall ever address you all publicly and in a body, while I have power to speak, or you to hear; it has been my earnest wish to address you on a subject of the greatest importance, and the most befitting your present circumstances. Hence, though among the great variety of interesting and pertinent subjects which have readily occurred, I have had great anxiety in fixing my choice; still, after diligent meditation, I have at length fixed it on the subject suggested in the second chapter of St. Paul's epistle to Titus, and sixth verse.—“*Young men exhort to be sober-minded.*”

By turning to your Greek testaments, you will at once discover that the original verb, here translated “*sober-minded*,” is compounded of two Greek words, which conjointly signify a soundness of mind, or a sound, healthy, reasonable mind. Hence Titus is directed, in the text, to exhort young men to possess and cultivate a sound, healthy, reasonable mind; and I can think, young men, of no exhortation more important in itself, or more befitting your present circumstances, whether I consider you as candidates for promotion and happiness in this life, or in the next.—In discoursing on the subject of this exhortation, I

intend to bring into view only a few of the many particulars, which are essential to a soundness of mind, and to draw from them some practical inferences and reflections.

I. It is essential to a sound mind to believe the eternal existence, and the infinite perfections of God. No man in the exercise of reason can make himself believe that nothing is the author of something; or that he himself has never had a beginning; or that the world and its component parts have no existence. Hence every such man must allow that there must be some eternal being. For, if there is no eternal being, it is manifest that there was once a time, when there was nothing in existence; and consequently, that whatever is now in existence, had its origin in nothing. But an eternal being must be self-existent; and a self-existent Being must be necessary; and a necessary being must be unchangeable; and an unchangeable being must be all-perfect and glorious; and such a being is the very God we are seeking.—Let it be only granted that the world and its component parts are existent, and not eternal, that is, not unchangeable, and that something cannot originate from nothing, which certainly none but a distempered mind will refuse to grant, and then none but such a mind can deny what the apostle asserts, that “*The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.*” There is no way, indeed, of avoiding the conclusion, that there is a God of infinite, underived perfections, but by denying the most plain suggestions of common sense, and by asserting tenets, which nothing but downright madness can induce a man to believe; that the world, that we ourselves, have no creator; that the sun, planets and stars, are upheld without any upholder, and governed without any governor; that all the phenomena of the heavens are the offspring of chance, or nothing; that all the beauty, order and contrivance on this earth, are accidental, and without design; that the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, are expressive of no wisdom, direction or control; and that even the curious and wonderful mechanism of man is the effect of no cause, the token of no contrivance. These, and numberless

other most gross absurdities, are essentially connected with the belief of atheism. On the very principle that we believe that any work of art is the effect of an artist ; that a watch was made by a watch-maker, we must believe that we ourselves, and the whole universe, are the effects of infinite, eternal power ; that we were made by HIM, *who has neither a variableness, nor the shadow of a turning.*

II. In a christian land, it is essential to a sound mind to believe that the Bible is the word of God. In proof of this, I will suggest the following observations :

1. A certain knowledge of future events lies wholly beyond the reach of man. No man can tell exactly what will happen even to-morrow ; much less what will happen an hundred, or a thousand years hence. It is as inconceivable that man, by his own reason, should gain a perfect knowledge of distant, future events, as it is that he, by his own strength, should annihilate the universe. The creation of all things from nothing is not a greater display of infinite power, than the foreknowing of all things is of infinite knowledge. Hence there can be no greater absurdity than to imagine that any Being but God can foreknow future events, or give an exact account of them before they arise,—In the bible there are many predictions of events, which were not to happen until a great length of time after the predictions were made ; and which also were wholly improbable, and contrary to all human foresight or expectation ; yet, at the time appointed, it has been found that those predicted events have exactly corresponded with the predictions. Hence it is clear, that those predictions must have been dictated by the spirit of God ; and that the bible, which contains them, must be divine. Must not that be a divine revelation, which more than seventeen hundred years ago, gave a historical account of the unnatural and dreadful convulsions, and even of the monstrous infidelity and atheism, which, at this day, pervade and torment the nations of Europe ?

2. The power of working miracles, or of suspending or changing the course of nature, is certainly the prerogative of God alone. If you have evidence that a man, by a bare command,

has made a dry way through the midst of a sea ; or has given health to the sick, speech to the dumb, sight to the blind, or life to the dead, you cannot possibly doubt but that man must derive especial assistance from the great invisible source of power. Surely none but God himself can be the author of such deeds. Hence Moses and the prophets, Jesus Christ and his apostles, must have been assisted by the special agency of God himself. For it is as reasonable to believe that the miracles ascribed to them were the effects of no cause at all, as to believe they were the effects of human power, or of any power less than infinite. Consequently they must have been the special agents of God, commissioned to manifest his counsels to men. The nature of things does not, indeed, admit a stronger proof of a divine revelation, than that which was given at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As it is certain that none but God can raise or animate the dead, he himself must have raised and animated Jesus after his crucifixion. Jesus, consequently, must have been the son of God, and his religion the pure offspring of the divine nature. Let us visit the burying ground ourselves ; let us behold a corpse deposited in the earth, and covered with clods ; and let us, the third day after this, visit the same ground and behold the same corpse inspired with life and vigor ; throwing off the cumbrous clods, and the funeral attire ; forsaking the awful mansion of death, and resuming its former converse with friends and spectators ! Must we not be convinced that God is there ? Must we not be convinced that whatever information this re-animated corpse shall give us, has its origin in the counsels of heaven ? Must not our minds, indeed, be dangerously distempered, if we do not yield to conviction ? Yes, I am bold to say, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was as great a proof that he was the son of God, as the nature of things will admit ; and that he, who, when that fact is once established, shall deny the divine authenticity of the scriptures, is devoid of that soundness of mind which is essential to a good judgment.

3. The bible contains in itself a proof of its own divinity. The character which it gives us of God, and the character which it gives us of men ; the way of salvation which it discloses by Jesus Christ, and the system of acting, speaking and thinking,

which it every where inculcates ; all its precepts, all its doctrines, all its information, though never to be reconciled with a human origin, are yet exactly such as might reasonably be expected in a revelation from God. No where else can we find so complete a description, even of ourselves, as we find in the bible. Let us turn our thoughts in on our own hearts, and compare what we there find with the character the scriptures give us of man. Though this may fill us with humility and astonishment, it will still shew us that HE, who knows the hearts of men, is the author of the bible. No where else can we find such a rational and glorious account of the character and government of God ; and no where can we find a way in which such imperfect, sinful creatures as men are, can be just with God, and made happy forever, but in HIM, *who is the way, the truth and the life*. No where else can we find a system of morals worthy to be compared with the morals of the bible. Search among the heathens, infidels and Mahometans, both ancient and modern ; search in every corner of the globe, you can find no system of morality so pure, so perfect, so divine as that you find in the bible. The morality here taught is enstamped with the infinite wisdom and benevolence of its author ; for it is exactly fitted to exterminate the whole herd of noxious passions from the human heart ; to dry up the most fruitful sources of human wretchedness, and to give men as great a degree of felicity as their very natures will allow. Hence the character of a christian comprises the whole cluster of moral virtues ; and they who are the greatest christians are the greatest proficient in love, peace, truth, patience, forgiveness, impartiality, faithfulness, philanthropy, patriotism. Where a man's heart is well enriched with these divine virtues, I never expect to find it at enmity with the christian religion. Hence, I think, it deserves a serious enquiry, whether an opposition to these virtues is not the sole ground of infidelity.

Hume and Paine are infidels. Locke and Newton are christians. Does not the difference of their belief arise wholly from the difference of their moral tempers ? But which of them is the most worthy your notice ? Will you believe David Hume, or will you believe John Locke ? Will you believe Thomas Paine, or will you believe Sir Isaac Newton ? For which of

their talents, or for which of their characters, have you the greatest esteem? Or which of them would you choose for your patterns, your patrons, your confidential comrades? There is no doubt. If we examine all the deists, we shall find them generally devoid of moral principles, and attached to practices which are ruinous to mankind, as well as condemned by the bible. Might it not be expected that such men would condemn the bible! Might it not be expected that they would condemn that sacred volume, which enjoins on them that very system of morals which they themselves are continually violating; and for violating which, where the bible is believed, they are exposed to the general disesteem and abhorrence of their fellow men? Yes, men are always ready to condemn what condemns themselves. Until infidels reform their characters; until they practice on the divine morality of the bible, and learn to do to others, as they would have others do to them, their unbelief can never be an argument against the divinity of the bible.

It is not my design, nor, indeed, is it possible on this occasion, to bring forward all the arguments in favor of the bible. Let it now suffice only to observe, that, on the very principle a man rejects the bible, he must reject the authenticity of all ancient records: He must deny that there were ever such men as a Homer, a Virgil, a Cicero; an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Charles V. He must deny that a revelation from God can possibly be established by sufficient evidence: He must assert that all the doctrines of the bible are the inventions of men, though they transcend human inventions as much as the sun transcends a candle: he must assert that the authors of the bible were base, intriguing impostors, though they have every mark of uprightness, veracity and benevolence: He must assert that the whole christian world, and, among the rest, that Boyle, Newton, Locke, Clarke, Addison, Barrows, Watson, Campbell, Price, Priestly, and numerous others, though the most splendid monuments of human genius and erudition, were yet a horde of ignorant bigotted dupes: And he must give up all assurance that he has any soul more than the brute, or that he shall ever survive the slumbers of death. Hence,

III. It is essential to a sound mind to give full credit to the

whole contents of the bible. There can be nothing more absurd than to believe that the bible is the word of God, and yet to believe that it contains any thing unreasonable, or contradictory, or unimportant. Whatsoever God reveals, must certainly coincide with the nature of God; and hence, can never interfere with right reason. Yet it is quite possible that we may not perceive the reasonableness of many things, which, in themselves, are wholly reasonable. Our reason, at its best estate, is very imperfect; and it is commonly clouded with prejudices and passions. Hence it must not be expected that we can fully comprehend a revelation from God; or, that every thing contained in that revelation must harmonize with our views. When our reason is once satisfied that God has given us a revelation, and what are its contents, then, however much those contents may differ from our reason, still our reason itself must acknowledge that they are reasonable; for nothing unreasonable can proceed from God, the source of reason. Hence all the doctrines, however mysterious or incomprehensible, which are really contained in the Bible, are justly entitled to our full belief.

IV. In this country, subjection to the established civil government is essential to a man of a sound mind. There must at any rate, be some civil government or other; or else the very best part of the community must fall a sacrifice to the very worst: All must be danger, disturbance or slaughter. The government now established among us is a happy mean between those two extremes, which have always been a scourge to mankind. At a distance both from despotism and anarchy, it consults solely the happiness of the people. Perhaps it lies beyond the wisdom of man to devise a government more rational in itself, or more beneficial in its effects, than that under which we live; and perhaps there never was a government on earth, which had the patronage of greater or better men, than our own. Let all the ancient, and all the modern nations in every part of the globe be thoroughly examined, you can find among none of them a government worthy to be compared with the American; nor can you find among any of them, more wise, experienced, faithful, patriotic, illustrious characters, than those who have

ever filled our presidential chair. Yet some men are daily murmuring against our government, or against its administrators. What do they mean? Can they expect a better government, or better administrators? Can they expect a better government than that which originates wholly from the will of the people, and which contemplates nothing but the happiness of the community at large? Or can they expect better administrators than those to whose names not the most splendid epithets can give additional splendor; than GEORGE WASHINGTON and JOHN ADAMS? Or can they expect that greater civil benefits will arise from any government, than those which now arise from our own? It is incredible. Do they not rather desire the subversion of all government, and the introduction of unbridled, barbarous anarchy? I do not contend that there are no imperfections in our civil government; for it has a human origin. But he must be either a knave or a fool, who will murmur against it, because it is not perfect. He may as well murmur against himself, because he is not an angel. There can be nothing perfect in this world; and what can be greater folly than to aim at what is impossible? There is scarce a possibility that a better system of government can be adopted, than that now adopted among us; but there is a high probability that, if this system were demolished, another would be introduced, full of dangerous anarchy, and cruel, unrestrained, arbitrary licentiousness; where property would be laid open to plunder, character to scandal, and life to assassination. If the murmurers against our government could only obtain their end, it is reasonable to fear that "the reign of terror and blood" would soon bound across the Atlantic, and devastate our peace, liberty, learning, religion, security, and every thing else which now sublimates our natures, or renders even life itself a desirable object. On the same principle, therefore, that a man loves these sterling blessings, or indeed that he loves himself, he will subject himself to our civil government, and lend it his cheerful aid. But I must hasten to some practical inferences and reflections. And,

1. I infer that it is as great a mark of folly to deny the existence of God, as it is to deny the most plain and certain proposition in Euclid. A denial of the existence of God, amounts to

an assertion, that *nothing* can be the origin of the world ; and what assertion can be more foolish than this ? Is not this as foolish as to deny that two and two are four ; or that a part is less than the whole ; or that things equal to one and the same thing are equal to one another ? Yes, young gentlemen, on the same principle that you deny the existence of God, you must deny the most plain mathematical axioms : You must deny even your own existence ; you must deny the existence of any thing and every thing in the lump. None but a fool, but a madman, can say in his heart, “ There is no God.” In large, indelible, effulgent letters, He has written his existence and perfections on your own existence, and on every object which can affect your senses. I exhort you to open your eyes, and to read them. If you will not, you must give up all pretensions to soundness of mind, and you may well lament that you have spent so much time, and labor, and money, in this institution. Nay, more, you must give up every rational source of consolation. Yes, if you will not believe there is a God, you must adopt the ghastly, murderous doctrine, that you have no creator, no preserver, no benefactor ; that you sprang you know not from what ; that you are bound you know not where ; that there is no virtue, no vice, no heaven, no hell, no immortal state, no day of righteous retribution, no, nothing which can elevate a man above an ox. O cruel, foolish, desperate doctrine ! Let me rather be swallowed up alive in the yawning earth, than embrace a doctrine so full of blasphemy, desperation, madness and misery.

2. I infer, secondly, that nothing but extreme folly or wickedness can induce a man to desire the destruction of the bible. Besides the evidences in its favor, which produce a moral certainty that it has a divine origin, the direct tendency of all the information contained in the bible, is to advance the happiness of man. Let its origin be whatever it may, a belief in the bible is eminently fitted to exalt the dignity and value of man, and to make him a better citizen, a better neighbor, a better father, husband, son. The mind of man cannot even imagine a system of morals better fitted to promote both social and individual happiness, than the system contained in the bible. Hence he who desires the destruction of the bible not only opposes all

the forcible evidences in its favor, but desires the destruction of the most salubrious antidote ever administered to the sorrows of man ; of that divine, benevolent system, which is profitable unto all things, and which, above every other, has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Let me exhort you, young men, to exterminate such a desire forever from your hearts. Indulge not even a wish that the bible may be false ; for our faith is very apt to follow our wishes. As you glory in that natural reason, which elevates you above the brutes, and in that improved reason, which elevates you above most of your fellow-men, let me exhort you to read the bible, and to examine its evidences with that candid spirit which is ever essential to the investigation of truth. Let your minds be wholly unbiassed by prejudice or passion, and willing to embrace truth from any direction. Let right reason assume her prerogative among your mental powers ; and I have no doubt but you will receive the bible with thankfulness, and make it your constant companion and guide. At the same time, let me exhort you to remember that there is a vast difference between receiving the bible, though an imposture ; and rejecting it, though divine. Though the bible were really an imposture, you would not injure yourselves by believing its contents ; for whatever its origin, it is certainly fitted, if you will observe it, to make you happy : And certainly there can be no great danger in believing what has a direct tendency to increase our happiness. But, if the bible is divine, your disbelief or rejection of it will be highly criminal and dangerous. It will not only deprive you of all christian consolation in life ; it will not only deprive you of all assurance that there will be an after state ; it will not only deprive you of the blessed hope of life and immortality ; it will injure you more than this ; it will expose you to the wrath of God, and to endless, consummate pain. If this were my last dying speech, therefore, I would exhort you to believe and to revere the bible ; to treasure up its precious information in your minds and hearts, and to make that the regulator of your thoughts, words and actions. Remember what the bible informs you, that you are the offspring of God, that you are dependent on him for every breath, and responsible to him for every thought ;

that you have forfeited his favors by your sins, and have placed yourselves in a state of guilt and condemnation; and that now you have no way to obtain his smiles, but through the merciful interposition of his glorious Son. Remember that there is now no other name, than the name of Jesus, given under heaven among men, whereby you must be saved; and that he is able and willing to save them to the uttermost who come to God through him. I beseech you to go to God in his name, and to accept the overtures of peace and pardon proclaimed in the gospel.

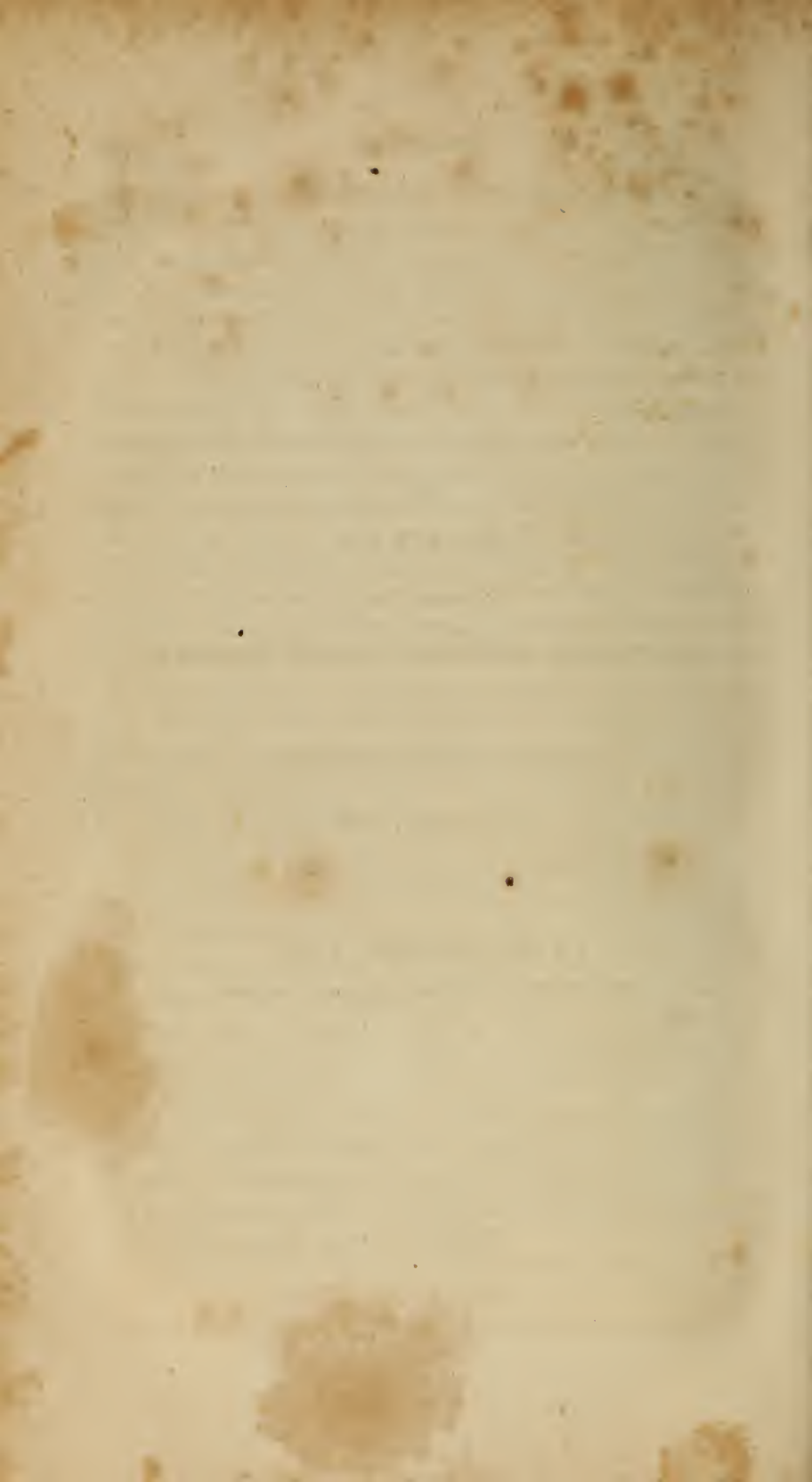
3. I infer, lastly, that the enemies of our government are the enemies of our religion, our country, and of mankind. Whether they are all *wilful* enemies I will not say; but this I will say, that the subversion of our government, which is their object, appears to be intimately connected with the subversion of all the governments, all the religion, and consequently, all the happiness of the world. It is not difficult to divine what would be the consequence, if these murmuring spirits could obtain their object—the most licentious and infernal manners, politics, irreligion and plunder, would soon be the torment of America; and all the peace, safety, religion, liberty and republicanism on earth, would soon be buried in chaos. I exhort you, therefore, my friends, to consider the enemies of our government the enemies of ourselves. Banish them from your company; and associate with none but men of sound, patriotic, American principles. Believe none of their slanderous reports. Let not the absurd and barbarous doctrine of political levelists ever disgrace your minds. Let not that jacobinic, diabolical phrenzy, which despises all constituted authorities, ever find a shelter in your breasts. Hold high in estimation our political fathers, and lend them your generous and cheerful aid. I beseech you, young men, my friends, my fellow-citizens, to enter into a solemn engagement with your own hearts, ever to resist every invasion of our civil or religious privileges, and ever to patronize that government, and those rulers, who now, under Divine Providence, distinguish us with all our peace, plenty and safety; with all our uncommon civil, social, domestic and religious happiness.

In finishing this discourse, I most heartily desire to give you

the very best advice in my power : for your connection with this College, which you are now ready to dissolve, has associated your happiness very closely with my own. It will always give me pain to see any of you in distress or disgrace, but it will always give me pleasure to see you all respectable and happy. Yes, young gentlemen, I covet for myself the sublime satisfaction of reflecting that you, who have spent so many years within these walls, have here formed yourselves for rapid advancements in every pursuit which can dignify your natures. I long to see you the ornaments of humanity, the pillars of science, the suns of our civil and religious firmament. Yet the very best advice in my power to give you, is contained in my text—“*Be sober-minded.*” Believe the existence, perfections and providence of God. Believe the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Let your thoughts, words, and actions, correspond with this belief ; and let your affections be fixed on the source of love. Act well your parts as men, as citizens and as christians ; and then you may ever expect the smiles of a gracious Providence, the love and esteem of mankind, and the approbation of your own consciences. You may ever expect a rich competency of the riches, honors and pleasures of time ; and you may console yourselves with the blessed hope that even your present sorrows as well as joys, shall all be made conducive to work out for you, in another world, a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. While I bid you, therefore, my most hearty and affectionate farewell, I cannot but indulge the hope, that you will ever cultivate that soundness of mind which a wise and virtuous character always comprises ; that, in this way, you will honor the place of your education, gratify your friends, and ennoble yourselves ; and that you and I may hereafter meet in a more happy, glorious state, and take possession of that heavenly inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away. I entreat you, young men, to substantiate this hope ; and I entreat the Father of Mercies to make you all *fare well* both in time and in eternity. AMEN.

AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED TO THE
GRADUATES OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE,
AT THE
PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 7, 1803.

BY ASA MESSER, A. M.,
PRESIDENT OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE.



A N A D D R E S S .

AT this time, young Gentlemen, your situation is peculiarly critical. Having just finished your collegiate studies, you are now ready to enlarge on the world, and to become personal actors in those important scenes, where thousands, for lack of skill, have been ruined. In discharging this last official duty, I feel solicitous to guard you against similar disasters, and to point you to a course which shall be safe and happy.—You must all be sensible that in this favored land the field of honor and promotion is open only to personal acquisition. Unless a man inherits the virtues, he inherits not the immunities of his Parents. You must, therefore, stand on your own feet. Hence it is especially important that you secure the approbation of the wise and worthy; and this you can secure only by adorning your characters with a virtuous, persevering industry. A life of indolence was never designed for man. His external situation and internal constitution both require that he should be active. Let the circle in which he moves be high or low, he must, if devoid of industrious habits be devoid of substantial enjoyment. You must not think, therefore, that because you have devoted yourselves to literature, you are free from the necessity of labor. No man feels that necessity more than the scholar. Whether you enter on public or private life, therefore, let me advise you

never to imagine that you have any time to spare for useless indulgencies ; but bear it ever in mind that the most industrious man is, other things being equal, the most happy in himself, and the most respected by others.

Like all other habits, however, a habit of industry can be produced only by a regular, persevering attention. Let this be remitted but for a short period, and a habit of opposite tendency will unavoidably begin to grow. Hence in the very outset you should be careful to place yourself in the view of such objects as are fitted to excite constant exertion. On this account it is highly important that you delay not to draw the plan of your pursuit for life. Until you do this, you will be living without an object ; and, your minds being in constant vibration, you will scarcely know what to do with yourselves. You will be more likely to envy the condition of others, than to better your own ; and more to subvert, than to promote the end of your existence. Though, therefore, you may find it difficult to draw this plan, let me advise you to draw it soon. Indeed, you will not gain so much by procrastination as you may imagine. Perhaps you may not, after ten years consideration, be more prepared than you now are, to bring your minds to the proper point.—At the same time let me advise you in this case to guard yourself against rash precipitation. A wrong step taken here may seriously affect you during life. That profession which is the best for others, may not be the best for you. Nature has formed different men for different stations ; and no man will appear well in a station differing from the intentions of nature. As it is of the greatest importance that you should ascertain what these intentions are in this particular, you will be careful to examine, not the honor and emolument attached to any station, but the nature and extent of its duties ; and to compare them with the tendencies of your own minds. You may be certain that nature never intended you for a station which you are not qualified to fill ; and you may be certain also that you are not qualified to fill a station which involve duties at invincible variance with your own minds. In this case let the success of others be ever so great, you must expect none for yourselves ; for no man, unless he loves his duty, will discharge

it with advantage.—Hence if you should think of entering on the profession of law, you should examine, not what others have done or gained in that profession, but what you yourselves can do or gain ; not what a high way it has opened for the promotion of others, but whether you yourselves are pleased with the study and practice of law ; and whether you can qualify yourselves to discharge with honor the arduous duties of the profession.

To those who think of entering on the profession of theology an examination of this kind becomes very solemnly proper and important. No arrogance can be more censurable or wicked than that, which will allow men, for the sake of lucre, to thrust themselves into the ministry. A law of nature in man renders it impossible that he should be indifferent to theological truth. In his view that truth must ever be attractive, or repulsive. No prospect of honor, or emolument can alter this law. Hence, while, a man's heart is not attracted by the solemn truths of theology, must he not, by attempting to explain or enforce them, exhibit himself in a very awkward and melancholy posture ? Can an office for propagating humility be gratifying to a man of pride ? Or will he discharge its duties with faithfulness and success ?—As the doctrines of theology are fitted to exalt the character of God, and to abase the character of man, it seems impossible that any man should inculcate those doctrines with satisfaction to himself, or edification to others, until he imbibes the spirit of them, and loves them. Notwithstanding my warm attachment, therefore, to a theological profession, and my earnest wishes to see it filled with respectable characters, I must still entreat you, both on account of your own personal felicity, and on account of the prosperity of true religion, never to step your feet on the sacred threshold of that profession, until you are fully satisfied that the solemn duties of it will themselves delight your hearts, and that you are prepared to discharge them with advantage to your fellow men.

The imperfections of human nature are such that but few men can render themselves eminent in many things. They who grasp at a knowledge of every thing, may generally expect to be skilful in nothing. You will find ample room for the ex-

ertion of your talents in a single profession. Whatever that may be, you will be careful to give it your principal attention.—Yet, as there is a strong connection between all the branches of knowledge, you cannot render yourselves skilful in any one of them while wholly ignorant of the rest. No man, indeed, can acquit himself respectably in any literary performance, until his mind is enlarged with a stock of general truths. Be guarded, then, against these two extremes; against distracting your minds by roaming at random among all subjects indifferently; and against contracting them by attending only to a few subjects exclusively.

It is the general expectation that men will acquit themselves according to the advantages they have had. Hence but few apologies are made for the ignorance of those who have had the opportunity of acquiring knowledge. It is, therefore, important that you, who have had this opportunity, should give full proof that you have improved it well; and hence that you should still persevere in the pursuit of knowledge. For if, calculating on your present acquisitions, you remit your attention to study, you must soon forget what you have already learned, and revert back to the point from which you started, when you first began your literary course.

In your intercourse with men you have need of great circumspection and sagacity. You will find them perhaps different from what you now expect; and, unless you are especially guarded, you may find yourselves obliged to purchase a knowledge of them at a dear rate. Notwithstanding the maxim which is good in law, that “a man is innocent until he is proved guilty,” you will find it dangerous to confide in any, until you have proof that they are worthy. Fatal experience has convinced many that selfish principles have an extensive influence on human actions. You will find most men alive to their own interest; and in general it will be the most safe to commit yourselves to them only so far as that interest may induce them to befriend you. Yet you will find some in whom you may ever confide; men who would not injure you sooner than they would themselves; and who in adversity as well as prosperity, will ever exhibit themselves the patrons of truth, integrity and be-

nevolence. Whenever you find such men, give them your warmest friendship. Value them more than the wealth of India ; and let their virtues be the patterns of your own.—Think not, however, that men of this character dwell only in a certain place, or bear only a certain name. Names differ greatly from things ; though prejudice would often confound them together. As you are privileged with a liberal education, you will banish prejudice from your breasts. It is fit only for the ignorant. You will think on a liberal scale. You will view men and things through the medium of candor. According to the advice which the excellent Dr. Watts has given you in his chapter on prejudice, which I beg you never to forget, you will divest yourselves of those youthful prepossessions, and local attachments, which becloud the mind, and render it unfit for the perception of truth ; and you will ever rejoice when the truth is discovered, even though it should condemn yourselves. You will then be able to guard yourselves against deception, and to confide only in the worthy. You will also discover that these must be ascertained, not by invidious distinctions, but by personal character ; and that true worth often dwells with him whom prejudice has marked with infamy.

Your own personal characters should be a prime object of your attention. No splendor of talents, nor advances in knowledge can compensate for the want of moral principles. Even vicious men, if they would tell the truth, would tell you that they cannot give their confidence to the vicious. The immutable distinction between right and wrong is so forcibly impressed on the minds of men, that, however wrong themselves, they require what is right in others. Be careful then to cultivate a fair moral character. Let no temptation seduce you from the path of rectitude. Hold the rights of others as sacred as you hold your own ; and remember that you have no more right to injure them than they have to injure you. As you abhor those who injure you, you must expect the abhorrence of those whom you may injure. Ever place before yourselves the golden maxim of doing to others as you wish they should do to you ; and never forget that the way of the transgressor of this maxim is ever hard.

In this connection it is important to be remembered that there is a strong intimacy between moral character and the belief of truth. That must be a singular infatuation, indeed, which can induce any to expunge the doctrine of belief from their system of morals. Let it only be granted that it is no matter what a man believes, and it must be granted also that, in a moral view, it is no matter what he does. If a man's belief has no influence on his practice, that practice will be as destitute of moral quality, as is the running of a horse, or the flouncing of a whale. If you wish therefore to consider yourselves as rational moral beings, you will give no countenance to that most gross, barbarous absurdity. Indeed, there appears to be the same connection between the belief and practice of a rational being as there is between a cause and an effect ; and therefore, while I exhort you to give diligent attention to the things which you practice, let me exhort you to give the same attention to the things which you believe.

Hence I must commend to your belief the important principles of our holy religion ; entreating you to receive them into your hearts and to follow them in your lives. These principles received in this way will give you a high elevation on the scale of moral excellence. They will incite you ever to act in character ; and they will ensure you the good will of all the amiable beings in existence. They will support you in the hour of adversity ; and, when your part on earth is acted, they will unfold to you a more exalted and happy scene, where there will be no tears, nor sorrow, nor sickness, nor death ; where friends will never separate, but where an uninterrupted blaze of glory will forever irradiate and enrapture their souls.

For these precious principles, my respected young friends, I must persuade myself you will cultivate a constant veneration. Into this persuasion I am unavoidably led by a reflection on the very laudable manner in which you, as a body, have acquitted yourselves, while members of this Institution. While I keep in mind your regular, studious and friendly deportment, and your zealous attachment to law, order and morals, I will not, I cannot allow the fear that you will ever disgrace yourselves by adopting

infidel principles or licentious practices. May the rich benedictions of heaven attend you, while passing through life ; and may the precious promises of the gospel support you in the hour of death. With these reflections, and hoping that you will receive them as coming from a friend, I must now bid you an AFFECTIONATE FAREWELL.



AN
ADDRESS
DELIVERED TO THE GRADUATES OF
BROWN UNIVERSITY,
AT THE COMMENCEMENT,
SEPTEMBER 5th, 1810.

BY ASA MESSER, D. D.
THE PRESIDENT.



AN ADDRESS.

THOUGH you, young gentlemen, are now finishing your collegiate course, you are not, I hope, yet finishing your literary course. Notwithstanding the respectable progress you have already made, there is still, you must be sensible, a long way between you and the top of the hill of science. Should you stop where you now are, you would resemble those *who put the hand to the plow and look back*. Should you never make any farther progress, the progress you have already made would engender reproach rather than applause. Reproach, you very well know, is apt enough to follow those who reach not the general expectation; and it is the general expectation that those who have had liberal advantages should also have liberal attainments. But liberal attainments always suggest persevering exertion. If you possess them now, you cannot, without this, possess them long. Like the water in 'Tantalus' cup, your treasures of knowledge, unless often replenished, will soon waste away. In an entire neglect of study, no man can long remain even in statu quo. A NEWTON, a LOCKE, a BURKE, a LA PLACE must, in this case, soon begin to fall from their envied elevation. Whether affected, therefore, by the hope of rising high, or by the fear of sinking low in the estimation of the world, you should, at any rate,

devote much of your future time to the completion of the literary course you have now begun.

A moral character, however, stands high above a literary. Knowledge, indeed, combined with guilt, will always give to guilt itself a blacker hue. To the very worst imaginable image of man, to the one exhibiting him as similar as possible to the very Prince of the dungeon below, a head the most informed is as essential as a heart the most malignant. Let your other attainments be ever so respectable, they can never become a substitute for moral principle: they can never give you the rank which this will give you in the eye of the world. Wholly destitute of moral principle, you would, indeed, be wholly unworthy the esteem, the confidence and friendship of every man on earth; and, without these, what on earth can you possibly discover, which is worthy a single exertion?—Were you to fix your attention exclusively on the objects of the earth; were you, without any regard to another world, to strive to secure the greatest possible treasure in this; were you to feel, what God forbid you ever should feel, responsible only to yourselves and to your fellow-men, the voice of reason would still direct you to follow the path of truth, of justice and benevolence; to cherish, indeed, that moral character, which is fair, unsullied, irreproachable.

Though this would evidently be the voice of reason, I must still remind you that, in such a case, men would not be apt to follow it. DAVID HUMES are seldom found in the ranks of infidelity. Infidels in principle are ready to become profligates in practice. Affected neither by the fear or the love of God, nor by the hopes or fears of a future retribution, men are ready to think that “the end will sanctify the means;” and to say, “let us eat, and drink;” let us curse, and swear; let us lie, and steal; let us, at all events, gratify our passions and our appetites.—Religion, young gentlemen, religion is the great support of morality; and this consideration alone should induce you ever to revere and to follow the principles of religion. Can you, indeed, once suspect the correctness of the principles which are essential to the preservation among men of truth, of peace, of order, of justice, of sobriety, of beneficence; of principles as essential to the welfare of nations, of families and individuals,

as light and heat and rain are to the progress of vegetation ? —But the correctness of these principles does not depend solely on this consideration. Can you even imagine that a watch can exist without a maker, or a ship without a builder ? Can you in any case allow that a man has made himself, or that a world has sprung out of nothing ? Yet these are the very absurdities and contradictions, which all must virtually adopt, who deny the being, the power and the wisdom of God. You must therefore, accept the most important principles, the very ground-work of all religion ; or you must reject the most important principles, the very ground-work of all reasoning. You must acknowledge either that there is a God, or that nothing and something, reason and madness, black and white, ten and one are the very same.

Can you make yourselves believe that the tongue of man can change the very laws of nature ? can cure the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb ? can stop the wind, the plague, the storm, the flood ? can you raise the dead ? Can you make yourselves believe that the eye of man can look through the veil which separates the present and the future time, and discern with accuracy the production of thousands and millions of events, depending, perhaps a thousand years to come, on the voluntary exercises of the soul of man ? Can you make yourselves believe that it was in the power of any man, at the time of HOMER, or VIRGIL, or even of MILTON, to specify the events which are this day occurring in Europe, or America ; or which are this moment occurring in this town, in this house, on that stage, in this pulpit ? Yet such is only a part of the absurd things virtually adopted by all who reject the religion generally received in this country, the religion of the blessed IMMANUEL. Never give any countenance, then, to the insinuation that this religion befits only the weak, the vulgar, the credulous, the ignorant !

It would not be less difficult to reconcile such an insinuation with a statement of facts, than with the deductions of reason. For a number of centuries, have not the talents, the genius, the learning of the civilized world stood principally on the side of this religion ? Has not this been the case with the most celebrated philosophers, astronomers, poets, orators, historians, mathe-

maticians? those resplendent suns in the literary heavens which have poured such a blaze of light on the eighteenth century, and given it such a lustre above the twelfth? In what corner of the world can you find a single library, I will not say a single book, which is worthy your notice, and which is not principally written by men bearing the christian name?

The original settlement of our own country, and especially of New England, must be ascribed to the indefatigable exertions of enterprising, conscientious Christians; and the subsequent cultivation and prosperity of it must be ascribed to similar exertions of similar men. To them must we look for the origin and the progress of our schools, all our colleges, all our social libraries, and literary societies. And are not these the very stamina of our civil privileges? These precious privileges evidently rest on that elective principle which pervades all our civil establishments; and will this principle itself be worth anything at all to a people destitute of the means of general information? Where can these means be furnished but in our literary institutions? Only let these be abolished; only let our schools, and colleges, and all their appendages be once abolished, and the whole land covered with the mantle of ignorance, would soon resemble those wretched lands, where the people have no voice at all, either in the election of rulers, or the enactment of laws; where a few families, a few individuals, an aspiring villain, perhaps a raving madman, or a worthless fool holds in his hand the destinies of the nation! On the side, therefore, of the Christian religion we may place that consummate wisdom which devised and established even the system of civil policy, which so admirably distinguishes us among the nations of the earth. If then you would become the associates of the greatest, the wisest, as well as the best men, who ever have existed, or who now exist either in the old, or the new, and I might say, either in the present, or the future world, you should become the associates of the Christian family; you should become the advocates of the christian religion.

I must, however, remind you, that coercion will never enable you to promote this divine religion. To force a man to become religious would be as difficult as to force him to become intelli-

gent, or sympathetic, or forgiving. The Christian religion must be embraced either not at all, or with a ready mind.—Good will to men is a primary principle of this religion ; and can good will to men be promoted by the persecution, or the slaughter of them ? Can the benevolence of the gospel feed itself on the malignity of a crusade ? Young gentlemen, our holy religion will not allow you to harm, or to hate even the worst infidels in the world, even the worst enemies either of man, or of God himself. It will rather require you to love them, and to bless them, and and to treat them as you wish them to treat you.—It would hence be easy to show that this religion will not allow you to make your own a measure for the faith or practice of your Christian brethren ; and I exhort you never to feel, or think, or act as though God had given to you, or to any man, a monopoly of conscience, or a spirit of infallibility.

To those who possess the requisite qualifications the office of a preacher of the gospel will exhibit very many allurements. What characters can be more dignified than the ambassadors of Christ, than the workers together with God in the salvation of sinners ? What employment can be more weighty, or benevolent, than to proclaim the glorious gospel of the blessed God ; than to show to guilty men the way to everlasting life ; than to bring to a perishing world the unsearchable riches of the covenant of grace ?—Should objects like these engross your attention ; should the glory of God and the welfare of men govern your hearts ; should the gospel seem to you to be worthy of all acceptance, and should you seem to yourselves *to be called of God as was Aaron*, I should rejoice to see you devoting your lives to this blessed work ; and I would implore the God of grace to give you strength equal to your day.—Should you, however, fix your hearts on objects opposite to these ; on the fame, the wealth, the power, the wisdom, the grandeur, the pleasure of the world, may God in mercy keep you from waiting on the altar.

I would, in any case, exhort you not to lay up your treasure in the present world. What but shadows and bubbles are all the treasures of the present world ? If you could possess them, you might not enjoy them. Though standing on the pinnacle

of human greatness, you might envy the condition of a common beggar. A President of the United States, a King of England, an Emperor of France, a ruler of the whole world might, indeed, be the most wretched man the world itself contains. O how worthless, how contemptible will all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them seem to a man on a bed of pain, in the gate of death, at the bar of God!—Whether preachers, or lawyers, or physicians, or farmers, or merchants, or mechanics, you will still be needy, feeble, dying creatures. On no one day will you be certain of living till another. At noon encircled with all the lures of life, you may at night be encircled with all the pangs of death. Your home is in another world. There lies your great concern. There you must live forever. There, young gentlemen, lay up your treasure.—To that other world the closing scene of this day is especially fitted to turn your attention. Before the clock shall strike again I shall have finished this address; and probably I shall never again address you as a class. Before the sun shall rise again you will be scattered abroad; and probably you will all never meet again, until you meet, with an assembled world, at the judgment of the great day. May the God of heaven grant that you may there meet as friends, as brothers, as *the ransomed of the Lord, those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

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